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SECONDARY SCHOOL REALITIES

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy**

by

PETER E. WOODS, B.A., M.Sc.

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Sociology of Education

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ABSTRACT

This is a symbolic interactionist account of certain aspects of life in a rural Secondary Modern School. A study of its subject choice system suggested two broad group perspectives among the pupils, one supportive of, the other rather indifferent towards school. These perspectives were reflected among the parents to some degree, along social class lines. There was considerable teacher direction, behind a rhetoric of choice. The many-sided nature of pupils' interests and reactions among curriculum, school and teachers was revealed. Three major categories of pupils' existence are examined - 'working', 'having a laugh', and 'being shown up'. All of these are shown to have a rational base and to be the product of complex negotiations.

Teacher realities at the school are also categorized into three major, and highly contrasting areas of activity, namely 'surviving', 'being professionals', and 'being persons'. Much of the teacher's classroom activity appears to have 'survival' as the major goal, often under cover of 'teaching'. In other instances, for example when writing school reports, teachers act as 'professionals', articulating ideal models of pupils and their expertise as teachers. In the staffroom, however, school matters are often viewed through a different perspective, not out of character with that employed in the private, as opposed to public sphere of life. As

with the pupils, laughter is a key element.

The thesis points to the effects of institutional forms upon the individual and upon relationships, over and above the considerable influence of external forces.

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PUBLICATIONS

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Understanding Through Talk, in Adelman, C. ed.,
Uttering, Muttering, Collecting, Using and
Reporting Talk for Social and Educational
Research, S.S.R.C., Bulmershe, 1977.

Parts of Chapter Four -

in The Myth of Subject Choice, British Journal of
Sociology, June, 1976; and
How Teachers Decide Pupils' Subject Choices,
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Teacher Decision-Making, Routledge and Kegan Paul,
in press.

Parts of Chapter Five -

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February, 1976.

Parts of Chapter Six -

in Relating to Schoolwork: Some Pupil Perceptions,
Educational Review, Vol.30, No.2, 1978, and
Negotiating the Demands of Schoolwork, Journal
of Curriculum Studies, forthcoming.

Parts of Chapter Seven -

in Having a Laugh: an Antidote to Schooling;
in Hammersley, M. and Woods, P., eds, The Process
of Schooling, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976.

Parts of Chapter Eight -

in Showing Them Up in Secondary School, in Chanan, G.
and Delamont, S., eds, Frontiers of Classroom
Research, N.F.E.R., Slough, 1975.

Parts of Chapter Nine -

in Teaching for Survival, in Woods, P. and
Hammersley, M., eds, School Experience, Croom
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INTRODUCTION

The basic assumption behind this thesis is that within the field of symbolic interactionism lies great potential for the understanding of school life. We have, as yet, hardly begun to explore this potential, but already, within the realms of sociological theory, symbolic interactionism is in danger of becoming a passing fashion. Certainly there are limits to its explanatory power. It will tell us little, for example, about the interrelationships among the political, economic and educational systems. But it will provide much valuable underpinning for that kind of study, as well as enriching our knowledge of human interaction in its own right.

This kind of balance between theory and practice is essential for satisfactory explanations. In the fifties and early sixties, sociology went through a period of 'hard-nosed empiricism'. It is now in danger of establishing a cult of 'light-footed theory building', theorising racing ahead of its empirical referents. Symbolic interaction by its very nature keeps us fairly close to the ground, but in making new constructions of that ground possible, offers important links to more generalised and more abstract fields of discourse.

For people-processing institutions like schools, symbolic interactionism is particularly rewarding, for the problems and issues of the day lie within interaction. These are perennial problems of teacher-pupil relationships,

professional achievement and individual frustration, high ideals and low performance, personal freedom and societal constraint. Both teachers and pupils appear to be undergoing more stress. Yet though school life can plumb the depths of despair for all concerned, it can also strike high notes of joy and happiness. Simplistic explanations, often personality-based, abound in schools. Symbolic interactionism can cast light on these extremes, offer more adequate explanations of one's own and the other's inconsistencies, put substance and shape on a whole mass of apparently disorganised and unrelated activity, contextualise the seemingly idiosyncratic impulse, in short display that school is not inhabited by a population of freaks, but that it constitutes a particular kind of social world that impinges on its occupants in particular ways.

This representation of school everyday life is the main concern of this thesis. In the development of the account, I shall give indications, here and there, of the possible implications for other fields of theory - and perhaps other theses.

CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

This thesis rests mainly on symbolic interactionist theory as associated with G. H. Mead and developed especially by Blumer. The first part of this chapter outlines the main features of this approach to social interaction. The second part examines the main 'focusing concepts' which bridge the gap between theory and practice; and the third relates the emerging programme to school life.

A. SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

The Self

At the heart of symbolic interactionism is the notion of man as constructor of his own actions and meanings, in contrast to more deterministic approaches which see action either as a release governed by psychological attributes such as attitudes, or as dictated by social structural considerations. This puts much emphasis on the mechanism of the 'self'.

The self is seen as

'A process of internal conversation in the course of which the actor can become to view himself in a new way, thereby bringing about changes in himself. Moreover in his transaction with others there occurs a flowing sequence of interpretation of the conduct of others, during which the actor may subject his attributes to highly variable use - or disuse.'

(Meltzer and Petras, 1967, p.53)

The human being is capable of becoming an object to itself, and of making indications to itself. The self is made up

of two elements, the 'I' and the 'Me' which are in constant interaction with each other. The 'I' is the individual aspect, the initiator of action; the 'Me' is the part of self as others might recognise, enabling the human being to view oneself as object in the environment. The 'I' and the 'Me' are in constant interaction with each other, and this interaction makes the 'self' a process, not a structure.

'To indicate something is to stand over against it and to put oneself in the position of acting toward it instead of automatically responding to it. In face of something which one indicates, one can withhold action toward it, inspect it, judge it, ascertain its meaning, determine its possibilities, and direct one's action with regard to it. With the mechanism of self-interaction the human being ceases to be a responding organism whose behaviour is a product of what plays upon it from the outside, the inside, or both. Instead he acts towards his world, interpreting what confronts him and organizing his action on the basis of the interpretation.'

(Blumer, 1971, p.12)

The Generalized Other

One can see one's own behaviour from the point of view of specific others, but also in terms of generalized and abstracted norms, values and beliefs. Hence the important concept of 'the generalized other' which makes the conceptual link between individual behaviour and society, and most clearly exhibits that behaviour as a social product. 'Taking the role of the other', Mead argues, 'is of central importance in the development of co-operative

activity or social life, and one learns to do it through socialization'.

According to Mead, there is a gradual genetic development in the human that occurs in childhood and which constitutes the ground for the adult self. One of the chief mechanisms in socialization is child play and the game, for in the game the child

'must be ready to take the attitude of everyone else involved in that game, and these roles must have a definite relationship to each other.'

(Natanson, 1973, p.13)

'The individual can only develop a complete self to the degree that he is able to assume the attitude of the social group, of which he is a member, towards the group's activities. Similarly, an ongoing social group or society is only possible to the degree that its members can assume the role of all other members with regard to the organized activities of the group, and can construct their own action in relation to it. Thus the individual can only become "whole" in the sense of a social person by internalizing the expectations embodied in "the generalized other"; and it is through the generalized other that the community exercises influence over the individual through his very thought processes.'

(Mead, Vol.1, p.155)

The relationship between the individual and society is dialectical, and neither can be understood fully without the other. Thus society can not be regarded as a

collection of the behaviour of individuals. Rather, one starts with society, or social group, and relates individual behaviour to it. In this form, through the generalized other, and through the interaction within the self between the 'I and the 'Me' the act or behaviour is thoroughly social.

In this way, the individual is both bound to, and contributes to, the culture of society, or of a group. Society is

'a collection of individuals with a culture which has been learned by symbolic communication from others, so that members can gauge their behaviour to each other and to the society as a whole (whether in co-operation or conflict).'

(Rose, 1962)

There is a certain outpouring of self into the world, and one important aspect of this is the process of 'self-lodging' whereby

'humans translate crucial features of their own identity into the selves, memories and imaginations of other relevant others.'

(Denzin, 1970)

At the centre of group life, therefore, there are a number of social selves that have been lodged in that structure and that provide for its stability. This is not necessarily a rational process. The person experiences pleasure or displeasure according to his interpretations

of the other's reactions to his presentation of self. The self, therefore, is a continually evaluated object, and 'self-lodging' may place a wedge between the most economical pursuit of a goal or even the rational selection of a goal, because it rests on the affective bond between self and others.

The Act - A process

The human being then, is the constructor of his own action. Since he is able to view himself as object, he can make indications to himself, and these, he interprets. This interpretation, though guided by culturally influenced perspectives, carries the essence of his individuality:-

'In order to act the individual has to identify what he wants, establish an objective or goal, map out a prospective line of behaviour, note and interpret the actions of others, size up his situation, check himself at this or that point, figure out what to do at other points and frequently spur himself on in the face of dragging dispositions or discouraging settings.'

(Blumer, 1971, p.12)

It is this which guided W. I. Thomas in his concept of 'the definition of the situation', wherein he argued that 'if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.' (Thomas, 1926). It is the interpretation that counts as far as outcomes are concerned, and therefore man's own thoughts and evaluations, not instinct, nor the 'objective' reality of the situation.

The processual nature of the act is well illustrated by Mead:

'There are no static elements. There are things that do not change although they pass. These are but two sides of the same situation, at least in the world that is there. There is no thing that does not change, except in so far as it passes, and there is no passage, except over against that which does not change. Motion, or change of position, is a change of that which in certain respects remains without change, while change of quality involves that whose substantial character remains unchanged - but neither takes place except in passage. Abstractive thought isolates these phases of the world that is there.....'

(Mead, 1938, p.66)

So the act is a succession of phases, of which the manifest behaviour is but one. It includes the initiation, the 'I' reflecting upon the various 'Mes' in the form of particular, significant and generalized others, which themselves are the product of much past interaction; taking the role of the other, making representations to oneself, interpreting, and ultimately performing the visible act. Therein lie its claims to being a sociological event. This is not to say that psychological attributes are not at all important, merely that it is a mistake to reduce the former to the latter.

The Individual and Society

Similarly with social structural factors. The conception

of man that symbolic interaction rests upon is as a

'conscious being who is shaped and liberated by his experience and thus is simultaneously an object acted upon and subject..... As persons act, the social is in the individual, the object is in the subject. In this way we can account for how the environment and our experiencing of it shapes and provides alternative possibilities for action.'

(Berlak and Berlak, 1977, 4-15)

Berger makes the same point in a well known extract:-

'Society is a dialectic phenomenon in that it is a human product and nothing but a human product, that yet continuously acts upon its producer. Society is a product of man. It has no other being except that which is bestowed upon it by human activity and consciousness. There can be no social reality apart from man. Yet it may also be stated that man is a product of society. Every individual biography is an episode within the history of society, which both precedes and survives it... What is more, it is within society, and as a result of social processes that the individual becomes a person, that he attains and holds on to an identity and that he carries out the various projects that constitute his life...'

(Berger, P.L., 1973, p.13)

Thus, of course, actions are neither totally original, nor is the individual totally bound by cultural and structural constraint. Some cultural experiences are for roles rather than individuals, some are for variation rather than conformity, and cultural meanings are possibilities not pressures, and are often internally inconsistent. Thus within these cultural meanings and influences, individuals have some possibility of innovating. (Rose, 1962, 3).

Roles

Actors need a basis on which to orient their interpretation of others, and to this end they first define the situation. This gives them a key to interpretation and aids the construction of their own action. Thus pupils learn to identify what constitutes 'a proper lesson', 'a conflict situation' or 'a laugh'. Key definitions become structured because previous interaction has established common understandings of them. This is how cultures arise, and how they both form a platform for interpretation and a basis for new developments.

These habituated ways are 'roles'; not roles prescribed by society acted out mechanically, but actively constructed in accordance with the individual's generally held definition of the situation.

'It is this tendency to shape the phenomenal world into roles, which is the key to role taking as a core process in interaction.'

(Turner, 1961, 22)

'The individual plays many roles in the course of a day, and indeed role-playing constitutes much of his behaviour.'

(Rose, 1962)

The dynamic process, as opposed to overscripted, static conception of roles is well illustrated by Plummer...

'The interactionist starts out from the notion of men busily constructing images of how they expect others to act in given positions (role-taking), evolving notions of how they themselves expect to act in a given position (role-making), and also imaginatively viewing themselves as they like to think of themselves being and acting in a given position (role-identity).'

(Plummer, 1975, 18)

Meaning

We have discussed the constitution of the self, the various phases of the act and the individual's preliminary definition of the situation. But what are the means by which the perspectives of others are taken into account? Mead argues that the central factor is 'meaning'.

'Meaning arises and lies within the field of the relation between the gesture of a given organism and the subsequent behaviour of this organism as indicated to another human organism by that gesture.'

(Mead, Vol.1, pp.75-6)

Man lives in a physical world, but the objects in that world have a 'meaning' for him. They are not always the same objects for different people. To some, a classroom can be an enlightening arena; to others, the same room can be a stultifying dungeon. To the same person, a piece of

chalk might be a writing implement on one occasion, a missile on another. The same is true of personal interactions. Man interacts through symbols. Language is one such symbol, as are gestures, and objects, in as much as the same object might have a different meaning for different people. Man learns, through interaction, an enormous number of symbols. Many meanings are, of course, shared, and this enables smooth social interaction.

'A symbol is defined as a stimulus that has a learned meaning and value for people, and man's response to a symbol is in terms of its meaning and value rather than in terms of its physical stimulation of his sense organs.'

(Rose, 1962, p.5)

Mead thought that we do respond to some things by instinct - he called these 'natural signs' as distinct from 'significant symbols'. The latter are learned, and require role-taking for their communication. These learned symbols collectively make up a culture, or subculture. If an observer is culturally attuned to an interaction, he can infer meaning from the symbols he witnesses - for meaning is not in the head:-

'It is an external, overt, physical or physiological process going on in the actual field of social experience.'

(Mead, Vol.1, p.79)

However, mind or intelligence is not possible except in terms of gestures as significant symbols. Thinking takes place in the form of an internalized conversation the individual has with himself, using those gestures,

representing the externalized other to the various aspects of the self. The mediation between these aspects is always in terms of symbols, and it is essentially a social activity.

'The internalization of the external conversations of gestures which we carry on with other individuals in the social process is the essence of thinking.'

(Mead, Vol.1, p. 47)

Herein lies the ability of the individual to change his world:-

'This capacity gives humans the power of adapting to and also altering the social and physical environment. Man is constrained, as are other creatures, by the existing social and physical arrangements, but in homo sapiens there exists the capacity for alteration of the existing constraints of his physical and social world.'

(Ibid)

The Berlaks put it like this:

'In sum, thinking is an elaborated process of adaptation of the person to the social and physical environment. It is an extension of the Darwinian concept of adaptation to include "mind" - the capacity of the individual to examine self - consciously the problem from differing perspectives to create novel - heretofore unknown - solutions to the problems of living. The process we call in our language of entities, "mind" is what enables homo sapiens to both adapt to the environment and alter it in order to cope with problems confronting the species.'

(Berlak and Berlak, 1977, 4-9)

Dramaturgy

This is a kind of interactionism, best represented by

Goffman (1959), the main tenets of which are:

- (i) In interaction, individuals try to 'manage' the impressions others have of them. They put on a performance. They will try to influence the other's definition of the situation.
- (ii) 'Others' also, of course, project definitions of the situation. Conflict is obviated and order maintained by individuals suppressing their heartfelt needs and wants and contributing to a script which all accept. They establish a 'working consensus'.
- (iii) In projecting an impression an individual takes into account his knowledge of the other. As interaction proceeds, and his 'presentation' becomes more adjusted and refined, so he becomes more committed to it.
- (iv) When events contradict presentations, breakdown of social interaction occurs, leading to embarrassment, anger, discomfort, or shame.

Goffman puts a particular gloss on the actor's imputation of the other's self. This is seen as the product just as much of theatrical as of substantive elements in the other's behaviour. We respond to the other in accordance with our 'image' of him. The other constructs this 'image' in accordance with what he wants us to see - i.e. he dramatizes his 'self'. Thus we manage our 'expression' so that others define ourselves as we wish them to. These expressions are made through words and actions, dress and display. All

this presentation equipment Goffman terms 'front'.

'Actors have to respond to each other for meaning to emerge and they are able to respond to each other because each of them takes the necessary steps to ensure that they announce their intentions - verbally and gesturally - so that the announcement would elicit the needed responses: they dramatize their meanings and create a social act.'

(Perinbanayagam, 1974, p.537)

This led Goffman to take a particular interest in the strategies by which people coped with situations, as in his celebrated work 'Asylums' (1968).

Goffman has been criticized for representing 'appearance' as 'reality', though the art of self-presentation includes both 'true' and 'false' presentations; and for portraying a conception of man as heartless, spiritless, amoral and robot-like, operating in a cynical, hopeless, disenchanted world. (Lyman and Scott, 1970, p.20). However, 'strategic interaction' as he later termed it was an aspect of human behaviour not touched on by Goffman's interaction predecessors and it should be seen as a contribution to the general debate within symbolic interactionism, rather than offering a complete picture of how man relates to his fellows, and that is certainly the spirit in which it is offered in this thesis. It opens up for study areas like embarrassment, manipulation, hypocrisy, insincerity, sociability, etiquette and laughter. It enables us to study the effects on people of mass-institutionalization. It provides us with access to a large part of school-people's lives hitherto regarded as sacred, unalterable, or simply

just not conceptualized, as opposed to the fraction associated with cognitive processes that used to be studied.

Birenbaum and Sagarin sum up the benefit of the approach thus:-

'First, the examination of the markedly different ways in which different people perform the same role reveals much about the range of behaviours that are permissible in our society, and how much by ourselves can be expressed and developed. Secondly, the fully interdependent relationship between conforming and deviant behaviour can be examined in face-to-face interaction, as when people say and do things whose moral rightness others question. When people fail to respond to threats and warnings, or when they respond more strongly than was expected. Accordingly, if we wish to avoid being objectified and treated as things, awareness of the basic processes of conformity, deviance and social control becomes crucial in avoiding the application of labels and categories that may be turned into characteristics of the person. Such a discovery would be tremendously liberating for people faced with the problem of avoiding or redefining an unacceptable identity as in the current effort to discriminate the deviant life styles of drug users, homosexuals, political radicals, and prostitutes. Finally, if we can discover how human beings create and re-create institutions in face-to-face interaction, it would not only give us greater respect for the impact of social institutions on our lives but also suggest new ways of controlling them; by mastering and controlling their sources - our own behaviour - we can receive immediate responses to our efforts to change institutions.'

(1973, p.6)

B. FOCUSING CONCEPTS

A symbolic interactionist approach leads one to focus on certain areas. The chief ones in this thesis are:-

Perspectives

These refer to the frameworks through which people make sense of the world. They are the essential starting point for a study of school life, for it is through these that pupils and teachers construct their realities. They assist in defining the situation, and identifying and locating the 'other'. The term in interactionism derives largely from Becker and his colleagues:-

'We use the term "perspective" to refer to a co-ordinated set of ideas and actions a person uses in dealing with some problematic situation, to refer to a person's ordinary way of thinking and feeling about and acting in such a situation. These thoughts and actions are co-ordinated in the sense that the actions flow reasonably, from the actor's point of view, from the ideas contained in the perspective..... A person develops and maintains a perspective when he faces a situation calling for action which is not given by his own prior beliefs or by situational imperatives. In other words, perspectives arise when people face choice points. In many crucial situations, the individual's prior perspectives allow him no choice, dictating that he can in these circumstances do only one thing. In many other situations, the range of possible and feasible alternatives is so limited by the physical and social environment that the individual has no choice about the action he must perform. But where the individual is called on to act, and his choices are not constrained, he will begin to develop a perspective. If a particular kind of situation recurs frequently, the perspective will probably become an established part of a person's way of dealing with the world.....'

(1961, 34-7)

Perspectives derive from cultures - they do not exist, nor are created in a vacuum. But while providing criteria of

judgement to help define situations, they are subject to modification, as the processual nature of interactionist theory would suggest. This cultural origin, the interaction between perspectives, values and attitudes, and their modification in use among other factors, will be a continual matter for investigation throughout the thesis.

Strategies

These perceptual frameworks are then linked into action. The action is thus impregnated with the meaning assigned to it by the participants, and is revealed as a mixture of strategies, adaptations and accommodations. Wherever they go in the school, pupils and teachers are continually adjusting, reckoning, evaluating, bargaining, acting and changing. The school has many stages, and there are various roles and scripts, some with traditional, routine qualities which carry a sense of having been worked through the years, others, more sporadically, carry inspirational freshness. I shall be concerned therefore to identify the properties of those routine qualities and investigate their origins and ongoing supports, as well as circumstances which find them deficient or redundant and which therefore call for modified strategies.

As far as pupils are concerned, we shall find that different perspectives lead to different orientations toward school and 'work'. Definitions of the situation vary, and pupils devise different strategies to cope. These are often occluded by use of a standardized vocabulary for all

activities. 'Work', for example, is commonly used by all pupils, but its meaning varies. I shall attempt to uncover these different interpretations. This will reveal different realities, often behind similar facades. Often, however, different symbols are used, different forms of vocabulary or different forms of communication. These should be identified, and their meaning divined. Clearly pupils' own vocabulary and accounts are indispensable to an understanding of the construction of meanings.

The concept of 'strategy' allows more consideration of the autonomous element in behaviour. It permits more initiative to the 'I', and rather less permissiveness to the 'generalized' other. As Lacey notes, Becker and his colleagues emphasized the homogeneity of student culture and the inexorably constraining influence of the institutional structure. They implied as a consequence, that there was little variation among student perspectives. (Lacey, 1977). But as Lacey's own previous work has shown, as has that of Hargreaves, student sub-cultures can form in opposition to the formal school culture, and exist, sometimes uneasily, sometimes comfortably, within it. (Lacey, 1970, Hargreaves, 1967). Work since then has demonstrated the existence of many cultures within the school actively constructed by pupils and teachers. (Dale, 1972, Furlong, 1976).

Lacey prefers the processual, indeterminate, ever-changing view of action, as expressed in my account of interactionism. Some strategies may appear to become routinized as the

individual achieves a balance between the situation, his interpretation of the requirements of 'others' and the satisfaction of his own self-interest. But these are eminently changeable, depending on circumstances and one's own position within them. As a succession of phases, the 'act' is liable to change as any phase within it changes, when the initiator of action, the 'I' then seeks a new balance.

What is the relationship between cultures, perspectives and strategies? Lacey puts it thus:

'As a group of individuals develop or acquire a sense of common purpose, so the sets of strategies adopted by them acquire a common element. It is this common element that enables the common perspective to emerge. As the perspective develops, and if over a long period of time, the situations that continually face the group have a common element, then the understandings broaden and develop to produce a sub-culture. The mark of the sub-culture is that its most important elements are not immediately lost if the individual leaves the group and the common situation of the group members. Perspectives are more quickly taken up and dropped than sub-cultures. To be sure the elements of sub-culture are often suppressed and can be almost completely covered by later behaviour patterns, but the supposition here is that these elements effect changes deep within the personality structure of the individual and are responsible for the richness, complexity and uniqueness of individual personality.'

(Lacey, 1977, p.70)

Lacey rightly recalls Becker's concept of 'latent culture'. This is a culture which has its origin and social referents outside the group the individual currently belongs to. As the individual progresses through life, he acquires a complete mixture of such cultures, which are all available

to him, to some degree or other, to translate into strategies. However, the point has been made that action is culturally specific, that is to say it is limited, as well as facilitated by culture.

As Lacey points out, 'In situations, such as a school where social class is a latent culture, working-class pupils will have a limited choice of strategies and the limitations will be difficult to overcome.' (1977, 71). This study will bear this out.

There are at least two dimensions not covered in this analysis so far. Lacey points to one of them - the ability of the performer, which can affect whether a strategy is acceptable or not. The other is the interests of the performer. One mode of expression of these is through the concept of commitment. This is central to my analysis, for it is through commitment that individual action, autonomous or not, meets system continuance.

Commitment

Institutions, once established, generate a certain momentum and interdependence. This is well illustrated in the case of 'school', whose place in the industrial society has become unassailable. 'Deschoolers' have hardly made a mark upon it. Its 'legitimations' are too well founded. However, it is important to realise that this necessity and interdependence comes out, not through some mystical property of the institution which renders it 'functional' for society, but through the consciousness of its members. As

Berger and Luckman put it,

'De facto, then, institutions are integrated. But their integration is not a functional imperative for the social processes that produce them; it is rather brought about in a derivative fashion. Individuals perform discrete institutionalized actions within the content of their biography and this biography is a reflected-upon-whole in which the discrete actions are thought of, not as isolated events, but as related parts in a subjectively meaningful universe whose meanings are not specific to the individual, but socially articulated and shared. Only by way of this detour of socially shared universes of meaning do we arrive at the need for institutional integration.'

(1967, p.82)

This takes us near to the point I wish to make.

'Individuals perform discrete institutionalized actions within the content of their biography.' They also contribute to the institution's functions and further legitimacy in accordance with their own personal investment in the institution. A very important part of oneself is left for extra-institutional reflection. And the degree of one's own institutionalization might be measured by the degree of one's commitment. Thus institutionalized consciousness comes about, not necessarily through a process of socialization in which one learns about the inevitability of certain parts of the world, but through one's own personal dependence on it. Institutional order and integration then might be seen as a product of the sum of the dependencies of the people who contribute to it. Thus, preservation of the self is linked with preservation of the system.

I refer to the term 'Commitment' as used by Kanter:-

'Commitment is a consideration which arises at the intersection of organizational requisites and personal experience. On the one hand, social systems organize to meet systemic "needs"; and on the other hand, people orient themselves positively and negatively, emotionally and intellectually, to situations. Since social orders are supported by people, one problem of collectivities is to meet organizational requisites in such a way that participants at the same time become positively involved with the system - loyal, loving, dedicated and obedient. This requires solutions to organizational or systemic problems that are simultaneously mechanisms for ensuring commitment through their effects on individuals - their experience and orientations. Commitment, then, refers to the willingness of social actors to give their energy and loyalty to social systems, the attachment of personality systems to social relations which are seen as self-expressive.'

(1974, p.126)

One of the major social system problems involving the commitment of actors is its continuance as an action system. This involves cognitive orientations bearing on profits and costs, and generally implies commitment to a social system role. 'The individual who makes a cognitive - continuance commitment finds that what is profitable to him is bound up with his position in the organization, is contingent on his participating in the system.' (Kanter, 1974, p.132). There is a profit in his remaining there and a deficit associated with leaving. Continuance is accompanied by 'sacrifice' and 'investment' processes. As a price of membership, members give up something, make sacrifices, which in turn increases commitment. So does investment, which promises future gain in the organization. The member takes out shares in the proceeds of the organization and thus has a stake in its future. He channels his

expectations along the organization's path, and the more he does so, the more he increases the distance between this and other possibilities. They grow more remote as his commitment grows larger. In this way, the process is self-validating, self-reinforcing and frequently irreversible. The member goes on further to lay down what Becker calls 'side-bets' as other, unanticipated sources of reward appear, once the line of action has been chosen. (Becker, 1960). Type and nature of commitment affects action, and one's choice has to do with preferred identities.

Negotiation

To study perspectives and strategies on their own is to run the risk of minimizing the actual interaction between people. But neither teachers nor pupils fall into these types of activity and set up camp in them. Rather, school life is a continuous process of negotiation and bargaining. The persistent properties of the art of identifying, interpreting, reckoning, choosing, maintain a dynamic which, in interpersonal relations of a conflict nature, makes the actual interplay between persons the most important element, as each seeks to maximize their own interests. In schools, therefore, one might expect the whole day to consist of negotiations of one sort or another.

Goffman is of relevance here, particularly with his concept of 'impression management'. (Goffman, 1959). This constitutes the attributes required of a performer for the work of successfully 'presenting a front'. To highlight

this work, Goffman illustrates some incidents of performance disruption - 'unmeant gestures, inopportune intrusions, faux pas and scenes'. When such incidents occur, the prevailing reality is undermined and the negotiation founders. I, too, shall be concerned with negotiations-gone-wrong and bargains-unfulfilled or -exceeded, for these reveal the boundaries of tolerance and the unwritten rules that maintain the consensus.

However, this type of performance disruption is mainly accidental, more typical perhaps of society in general or consensus institutions with common cultural properties. In highly differentiated societies like schools, and certainly in the school of this study, where conflict is more a feature of the day, there are often conspiracies to disrupt, as teachers and pupils try to enforce their realities. Thus a class might attempt to transform a formal lesson into a 'laugh', or a liberationist teacher might try to undermine the authority of the head teacher. Such a community is often marked by uncomfortable truces, where embarrassment is used as a weapon in the attempt to enforce one's own version. Two things follow. First, 'negotiations' are not always peaceful, marked with goodwill and agreement to find common ground. They are often conflictual, marked by rancour, and bad feeling, not only concerned to optimize one's own concerns, but to belittle the other's. Indeed the two appear to have become identical over the years. Secondly, in view of this, one is led to investigate the relevant power of the parties to the interaction. There is

a pronounced hierarchy amongst the teachers, amongst the pupils and amongst various forms of knowledge. Teachers and pupils hold different positions and statuses. Teachers set the scene, make the groundrules, state the aims - basically to transform the pupil by new knowledge; while the pupil is forced to operate on the teacher's ground and by his rules, compensating only by force of numbers and certain resilient properties of their background culture. Both of these will be constant themes in the study.

The concept of 'negotiation' derives from the work of Strauss and his colleagues on the social relationships of psychiatric hospitals (Strauss et al., 1964). Their analysis includes these various elements of different cultures, different occupational ideologies and different power bases, and shows how working agreements are produced between psychiatrist and patient, and between psychiatrists themselves. These negotiations are often subtly implicit, and recognized by sophisticated and abbreviated symbols. They represent the 'hidden mechanics' that hold a working community together.

The concept has been applied to teacher-pupil interaction before, but either at simply a theoretical level, or in vastly different schools, or different activities from that and those of this study, (Esland 1971, Dale 1971, Barnes et al. 1969, Delamont 1976, Holt 1967). In examining the basically conflictual relationship between teacher and pupil, Esland notes the emphasis in research studies on class

differences and that 'There has, so far, been much less research into how the differences between the teacher's and pupil's social worlds are caused by the ways in which teaching and learning are organized'. This 'institutional' aspect will be a persistent theme throughout this study.

So too, will be the informal rules that underwrite the negotiation. In a sense there are only informal rules, for the formal rules are themselves negotiated. As Strauss et al. note,

Most rules can be stretched, negotiated, argued, ignored, or applied at convenient moments. In fact, if the information, change and application of rules are examined closely, the conclusion must be that there is a "negotiated order" within which rules fall.'

(1964, p.313)

It might be argued that from an 'official' position, many of these negotiated instances constitute 'deviant' cases, are anarchic and often 'meaningless'. They are meaningless, of course, only from the 'official' position. Where pupils seek more scope in interaction, the search for meaning is what it is all about. It is the task of the researcher adopting an interactionist position, to uncover those meanings from the point of view of their constructors. The apparent anarchy, disorder and 'waste-of-time' that seems so typical of many schools, is shown to be meaningful and rule-bound, and clearly linked to the official processes of the school. (Marsh, Rosser and Harre, 1978). In other words, it is all part of the negotiative activity among teachers and pupils. 'Having a Laugh', 'Working', 'Skiving',

'Making Trouble' are therefore important areas for a full understanding of school life, the most important from the pupil's point of view; whilst from the teacher's, those snatched moments of staff-room relaxation, the interstices of the school day, also come into prominence. Also, the interactionist approach which develops its analysis from within the experiences and constructions of the inmates, raises questions about the manifest activity itself. Teaching and learning themselves become problematic activities.

These activities are occluded by rhetoric, one of the prominent strategies in school negotiations. In a well-known article, Donald Ball illustrated how an abortion clinic attempted to neutralize its deviant image by means of a 'rhetoric of legitimation'. (Ball, 1966). The 'nasty' elements are covered by a different presentation of front. This 'impression management' to redefine the situation in respectable terms is shown by Ball to be a gloss, not at all in accordance with the reality of the situation. Sharp and Green have suggested some rhetorical elements in progressive education. (1976). Such studies illustrate the need to watch for 'appearances' constructed in the interests of 'pragmatic efficiency'. This is even more important in institutions like schools, where there is often a wide disjunction between educational ideals on the one hand and the pressures and demands of the actual situation on the other. Complicating this picture are the professional concerns of the teacher. Rhetorics, in other words, either

have to be dispensed with, or be very good. In some instances, teachers persuade themselves of their truth. Some have become legitimated, and institutionalized. They become part of the teacher's training, or at least his initiation into school. Rhetorics compensate for the clash between aspirations and reality.

Contexts

The concept of negotiation gives width and depth to the flat appearance of manifest activity in school. The notion of rhetoric shows how the reality might be composed in layers. Other aspects affecting the interaction - like commitment - cut across this, so it is plausible to hypothesize that use of and allegiance to rhetoric, for example, is associated with type and degree of commitment. 'Contexts' complicate the matter further, for perspectives differ according to the situation in which the interaction arises. (Keddie, 1971, Hargreaves et al, 1976). Thus teachers might employ an 'educationist' perspective in the staffroom, a more pragmatic 'teacher' one in the classroom. (Keddie, 1971). Pupils might employ different perspectives in playground and classroom, and between different teachers depending on what situation is brought into play.

Goffman identifies 'regions' using the term 'front region' for where the performance is staged, while a 'back region'

'may be defined as a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course... It is here that the capacity of a performance to express something beyond itself may be painstakingly fabricated; it is here that

illusions and impressions are openly constructed. Here, stage props and items of personal front can be stored in a kind of compact collapsing of whole repertoires of actions and characters... Here the performer can relax; he can drop his front, forgo speaking his lines, and step out of character.'

(1959, p.p.114-115)

'Back regions' play an important part in sustaining impression management, providing the means whereby 'individuals attempt to buffer themselves from the deterministic demands that surround them'. Clearly the staffroom and playground might be seen in this way. The contrast between 'front' and 'back' is often evident in language, the backstage language consisting of

'reciprocal first-naming, co-operative decision-making, profanity, open sexual remarks, elaborate griping, rough informal dress, "sloppy" sitting and standing posture, use of dialect or sub-standard speech, mumbling and shouting, playful aggressivity and kidding...'

(Goffman, 1959, p.129)

Goffman identifies a notional third region, which he terms loosely 'the outside'. Here my analysis parts company with his, for I discern strong linkages between 'the outside' and 'back regions'. The key to the link is in personal identity.

Identity

In the dynamic dialectic that constitutes an act, I stressed the original, autonomous potential of the individual. But social action is culture bound, related to one's interpretation of the 'other'. Between these two forces the individual develops an identity. He acquires an array of characteristics

from the multifarious spread of roles available in society, and projects an image of himself to others in the process, discussed earlier, of 'self-lodging'. Clearly, Goffman's 'presentation of front' and 'impression management' are closely related to this idea, as is the whole field of identity theory, which

'begins with the notion that each of us has an interest in being or becoming somebody special, sufficiently different from his fellows to save him from anonymity, and different in ways that enable him to command some admiration, respect and affection.'

(Cohen, 1976)

Part of the teacher task is to influence the development of identities both in the form of individuality and initiative (as conveyed in progressive ideologies) and in the form of compliance and co-operation (as in traditional ideologies). These are not necessarily incompatible. The process of 'self-lodging' must be related to everybody else's interests, but within that general restriction, the encouragement of initiative is in the interests of the advancement of the individual and subsequently of society. However, the teacher's pedagogy in this respect also appears to be culture-bound, so that for many pupils reared within different cultures, teachers appear to be attacking their very selves. The presentation of the desired self might become intensified as a result, together with attempts to discredit the attacker by undermining the bases of his identity.

One of the main assumptions on which this thesis rests is that people are concerned with developing, projecting and

safeguarding a desired image of self. We shall see that many of the conflicts in my study school can be traced back to this source. But selves are not necessarily unilinear, or unidimensional. That is to say that people may choose to project different images of self in different contexts. Some may be complementary, others may be compensatory. For example, one particular form of presentation of self may be forced, rather than self-chosen, such as the rebellious pupil forced to be dutiful, or the kind-hearted teacher forced to be autocratic. The greater the conflict within a school, the more likely this forced, false presentation of self with increasing emphasis on compensation in 'back regions'.

This division of self is aggravated by another contextual division - that between the public and the private spheres. The latter is equivalent in some respects to Goffman's 'outside' but I shall argue that it carries more implications for the 'inside' than he allows. An increasing lobby argues that a prominent feature of advanced industrial society is the sequestration out of the public sphere of elements such as those relating to affective and spiritual feelings and prospects for self-realization (Berger et al. 1974, Turner 1976, Taylor and Cohen 1976, Bell 1976, Luckmann 1967). Opportunities for man's reasoning, intellectual and aesthetic interests and pursuits are more abundant, by this argument in the private sphere, and the individual is better able to grasp the dialectical relationships between himself and society, and thus be more

of a 'whole' person. As Luckmann puts it,

"Ultimate" significance is found by the typical individual in modern industrial societies primarily in the "private" sphere - and thus in his private biography. The traditional symbolic universes become irrelevant to the everyday experience of the typical individual and lose their character as a (superordinated) reality. The primary social institutions, on the other hand turn into realities whose sense is alien to the individual. The transcendent social order ceases to be subjectively significant both as a representation of an encompassing cosmic meaning and in its concrete institutional manifestations. With respect to matters that "count" the individual is retrenched in the "private sphere".

(Luckmann 1967, p.109)

This 'distance' between the individual and the institution increases the credibility of Goffman's notion of the 'performed self' which

'...does not derive from its possessor, but from the whole scene of his action, being generated by that attribute of local events which renders them interpretable by witnesses. A correctly staged and performed scene leads the audience to impute a self to a performed character, but this imputation - this self - is a product of a scene that comes off, and is not a cause of it. The self, then as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is whether it will be credited or discredited.'

(Goffman, 1959, p.p.244-5)

Inasmuch as the 'stage' of the school becomes more difficult, the 'props' remain in short supply and the audience unappreciative, the teacher will experience difficulty in presenting a fully gratifying image of self. Inasmuch as the pupils find themselves unwilling or half willing members

of the theatre audience, they will not effectively perform the work necessary to construct an area of interaction productive of adequate and credible selves. But this work, nonetheless, must be done, for the institution to survive. So where is it performed? It is the contention in this thesis that the main work of identity-construction is performed in the interstitial areas of the school day - between lessons, at breaks, during the lunch hour etc. - and in the 'back regions' - staffroom, playground and corridors.

However, this should be seen as a tendency rather than a complete picture. Social life consists of shades of grey, rather than blacks and whites. For instance, some undoubtedly prefer to associate their 'selves' with the institution, and their activity involves more planned and staged performances. (Turner, 1976). I shall take up these differences later in the thesis. For the moment, we might simply note that identity construction, projection and preservation is one of the most important concerns of the individual, that situations of heavy conflict in school represent, in a sense, battlegrounds for one's life, but that the battle may be waged half-heartedly because one's preferred identity is elsewhere. Type of investment of self depends on type (not necessarily degree) of commitment; and partial investment of self aids negotiation, either by default, or because it matches pupils' partial investment.

C. THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME

A symbolic interactionist approach carries an emphasis on

- the individual as constructor of his own actions;
- the various components of the self and how they interact; the indications made to self, meanings attributed, interpretive mechanisms, definitions of the situation; in short, the world of subjective meanings, and the symbols by which they are produced and represented;
- the process of negotiation, by which meanings are continually being constructed;
- the social context in which they occur and from whence they derive. By 'taking the role of the others' - a dynamic concept involving the construction of how others wish to or might act in a certain circumstance, and how the individual himself might act - the individual aligns his action to that of others; the cultures actions arise from and contribute towards - social class cultures, pupil cultures.

These areas of social life can be illuminated by study of perspectives, strategies, commitment, negotiation, contexts, and identity, both independently, and in their inter-relationships.

With regard to school, the kinds of questions raised are

- How do pupils interpret school processes and organization, such as lessons, teachers, the curriculum? In particular, how do they interpret

processes which purportedly allow them some choice?

- What factors bear on these interpretations? What significant or generalized others have influenced them? How are they linked culturally, and what structural correlations do they have?
- How do pupils experience school processes? There is emphasis here on the affective response involved in the process of self-lodging.
- How do pupils organize their school activity?
Having defined the situation (through perspectives in context) and experienced it (in relation to their identity concerns), what strategies do they adopt?
- Similarly, how do the teachers interpret, experience and organize activity, and what are the associated factors?
- Similarly, with parents.

Such questions place the centre of enquiry within individuals, as the constructors of their own action. But the locus of interaction is in neither, but between them. The most important root question, therefore, to take in the 'negotiation' aspect is

- What happens among teachers and pupils in school?

This question makes no assumption about what does happen, for example 'teaching' and 'learning'. These now become problematic. The key to the beginning of enquiry is what the inmates think is happening. 'Cues' they provide are followed up by observation and filled in by further enquiry.

It will be seen that neither 'teaching' nor 'learning', at least in their commonsense form, are prime activities. We are in the area, then, of 'hidden curricula', 'hidden pedagogies', and 'hidden learning processes'. These areas to date, have, with a few notable exceptions, only been sketchily and speculatively touched upon. Detailed case studies of schools which attempt the typically ethnographic 'holistic' pictures, and which employ the rigorous procedures developed in such research, are in short supply. Yet they are essential, both for the understanding of schools and their place in society, and for the advancement of the educational process.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Participant Observation

How does one operationalize such a programme? The chief method is participant observation, which in practice tends to be a combination of methods, or rather a 'style' of research, in which the chief instrument is the researcher himself. It is a feature of this orientation to research, unlike surveys for example, that many of the techniques of actually doing the job are implicit in the theory and methodology, that is to say, that given the theoretical persuasion, many of the 'techniques' follow automatically. This is just as well, since the participant observer comes to face many ad hoc problems. Textbook discussions of how to do this kind of research therefore tend to be highly individualistic discussions of how the authors did their researches, and they only really make sense to others already in the field, after the contingency has arisen, so to speak.

a) Why participate and how?

In the interests of making the school 'anthropologically strange' (Garfinkel, 1967), we would first question the more obvious assumptions often made in educational research, which serve to focus attention on problems connected with the school's educational function. Not only might other features of the school outweigh the educational function in members' scales of priorities, but they might also carry implications for that function. Wax and Wax cite the example of a case where the researchers hypothesized that 'the progressive "withdrawal" characteristic of Indian pupils in schools is the outcome of a psychic inadequacy

related to their upbringing.' They comment:

'Were these investigations to perform some elementary ethnography, inquiring as to how the Indians perceive their community situation and the role of the schools, and if they were then to observe classroom interactions, their comprehension of what they presume to be a psychic inadequacy might be thoroughly transformed. But for this to occur, they would have to be prepared to examine the school as a real institution affecting a real interethnic community of Indians and Whites instead of reducing the school to an educational function and dissolving the Sioux child out of his community and his lower-caste situation.'

(1971, p.9)

The same point is made by Bartholomew. He takes sociologists to task for making 'unwarranted models of the school' and for assuming that inmates operate under the auspices of that model. Thus the sociologist 'creates anomalies of his own devising and at the same time obviates the possibility for asking questions about the situated rationalities in terms of which his teachers are in fact operating.' (1974, p.16-17). In fact, 'pupils and teachers operate the most complex strategies whose rationalities parallel any that can be imputed to the scientists.' (Ibid, p.17). In other words, we should not assume that teachers are teaching and pupils are learning 'to some degree or other.' We might start by asking a different question: 'What is going on here?' or 'What are people doing to each other?'; and proceed by integrating members' accounts into the interpretation. One difficulty with members providing these accounts is that we, as members, do not always know why we do things, or sometimes

we cannot, do not or will not identify our own reasons, rhetorics or ideologies; so that members' accounts can be non-forthcoming, non-existing, unsatisfactory or misleading. This is where the sociologist stands to gain from participation, that is by assuming a recognized role within the institution, or group and contributing towards its function. In time, the sociologist becomes a member, and can proceed by reflection and analogy, analysing his own reactions, intentions and motives, as and when they occur during the process of which he is a part.

Bruyn has culled these major points about the activity from the research literature:

'1: The participant observer shares in the life activities and sentiments of people in face-to-face relationships.'

(1966, p.13)

Thus the participant observer cannot be neutral, uncommitted, value-free in his research. He is not an observer on the side-lines, watching what goes on in the clinical sense. By his participation, he both acts on, and is acted upon by the environment. But he must try to combine deep personal involvement and a measure of detachment. Without the latter, he runs the risk of 'going native' that is identifying so strongly with members that he finds himself defending their values, rather than actually studying them, thus inhibiting the development of hypotheses (Geer, 1964). Diligently keeping 'field notes', and a generally reflective attitude which should alert to shifts in one's own views, guard against this. The extent on the commitment, the observer's reactions,

and how he has changed himself, all become part of the account. Redfield urged his anthropologist colleagues not to hide behind a 'mask of neutrality'. (1953, p.156). Robinson advises the researcher to 'enter a public debate with himself in an attempt to elicit the basis of his own perception'. (1974, p.251).

Sharing in life activities necessarily involves learning the language, rules and mode of behaviour, and role requisites, assuming the same dress and appearance, tasks and responsibilities, and becoming subject to the same pressures and constraints.

'2: The participant observer is a normal part of the culture and the life of the people under observation.'

(Bruyn, 1966, p.15)

That is to say 'special' roles have not been created. However, the nature and degree of the participation might vary according to the aims of the research, the researcher, and the culture concerned. In schools, for example, it seems to have been customary for researchers to take on a teaching load of half a timetable. (Hargreaves, 1967, Lacey 1970). A full load would militate against that required element of detachment. Some sub-cultural studies on the other hand have required almost complete immersion. (Whyte 1955, Yablonsky 1968, Patrick 1973, Parker 1974, Willis 1977). Whyte joined a Chicago gang; Yablonsky became a hippie:

'at a certain point in the research I decided it was of vital importance for me to personally experience some core hippie behaviour patterns in order to truly tune-in to what was happening. When the opportunity emerged in the flow of my trip, I decided it was crucial to my research to enter into several acts that conflicted with the primary life-style values of a generally law-abiding middle-class professor.'

(1968, p.xiii)

Parker had a marginal position with his 'catseye kings':

'My position in relation to theft was well established. I would receive "knock-off" and "say nothing". If necessary I would "keep dixy", but I would not actually get my hands dirty. This stance was regarded as normal and surprised nobody; it coincided with the view of most adults in the neighbourhood.'

Parker aimed

'to become an insignificant variable. That is whilst one can watch and/or take part in normal group activities and so contribute to the dialogue, one must not alter the group's processual direction. One may occasionally alter content, but never form.'

His liaison with them worked, but might not have done if he had not been 'young, hairy, boozy, etc., etc., willing to keep long hours and accept "permissive" standards.'

(Parker, 1974, p.p.219, 223).

In relation to his research in Lumley Secondary Modern School, Hargreaves summed up the advantages of participation thus:

'In theory (it) permits an easy entrance into the social situation by reducing the resistance of the group members; decreases the extent to which the investigator disturbs the "natural" situation; and permits the investigator to experience and observe the group's norms, values, conflicts and pressures, which (over a long period) cannot be hidden from someone playing an in-group role.'

(1967, p.193)

Clearly, the more closely one can identify with the role and merge into the scene, the more chance of success one has in these aims. Thus if participating as a teacher, prior experience of teaching helps.

'3: The role of the participant observer reflects the social process of living in society.'

(Bruyn, 1966, p.20)

Though the participant observer makes an intensive study of one group, his findings will have relevance for other groups, not necessarily within the same kind of institution. Studies of hospitals, prisons, asylums, schools, etc., inform each other - they have certain institutional processes in common. But the research can have relevance beyond institutional life. Sub-cultural studies like those of Patrick (1973), Parker (1974) and Willis (1977) are valuable commentaries on society at large. Interactional studies of schools can tell us much about the inter-relationship between the economic, political and educational systems, as they can about social interaction in general. We can find out, for example, how far pupils are instrumentally or expressively orientated and the bases of their orientations, and this will relate to stratification and economic systems; or we might find that certain strategies and techniques of social behaviour are part of one's general social equipment, so that studies, say, of embarrassment, domination, aggression, humour and so forth in

schools (or anywhere else) have wider validity. Bruyn concludes that:

'If the researcher is aware of the hazards and the rules of the method of participant observation, then he should be able accurately to find the cultural meanings contained in any group he studies - some meanings of which may lie at the root of man's existence in society.'

(ibid, p.21)

In the same vein, Wolcott has observed that:

'the ethnographer's compelling interest is his continuing enquiry into human social life and to the ways that human beings confront their humanness.'

(1975, p.125)

The Involved Observer

Special roles then, designed to fit the researcher's purposes, are not created. However, the nature and degree of the participation might vary according to the aims of the research, the researcher and the culture concerned. In schools, as noted, it seems to have been customary to take on a teaching load of half a timetable. Some sub-cultural studies have required almost complete immersion. Others adopt marginal positions. My own was of this nature, and was of such a character that I preferred to think of myself as an involved rather than participating observer. I did not take on an accepted role in the institution, though I occasionally helped out with supervisions, took part in activities such as playing chess, umpiring cricket matches, accompanying pupils on community service to hospitals, town halls, old people's homes and above all, shared in staffroom life with the teachers. The involvement

was in the relationships entered into with staff and pupils, an identification with the educative process, and a willingness to go along with their perceptions of my role. These perceptions incorporated me into the framework of the school. For example, I was seen, variously, as, among others:

1. A relief agency, or counsellor, by both pupils and some staff. One teacher told me, 'It helps me to get this off my chest,' in one private discussion I had with him. And a girl in 5L said, 'We like talking to you, it helps us feel better about it.' On some days, when I was working all day in the staffroom, different individuals would come in in succeeding periods and confide in me their opinions of the school, the headmaster or a current topical issue. In this sense I persuaded myself that I was functional for the school. Not having any ties with the school, not being dependent on it for my livelihood, not having to teach or be taught or keep order, not having an official role (and hence no role conflict) (Hargreaves, 1967), not having to take sides, I could lend a sympathetic ear to all.

2. A secret agent. I would be surprised if some pupils did not suspect my motives, and identify me with the teachers, or at least the cause that they represented. Certainly, the headmaster saw me in that light, and was only interested in whether I had discovered any fornication or drug-taking on school premises. He tried to persuade me to travel to school on the school bus, as I would 'act as a force of order' in that problem-bound vehicle. Had I done so, I would have been more interested in identifying the cultural

patterns that pertained on the bus, rather than enforcing school rules which they contravened.

3. A factor to be used, or appealed to in power struggles. This was a following-through of the counselling function. At times I felt people 'rehearsed' their cases with me, sought out my 'bird's-eye' view of the situation (denied to them because of their total particular commitment to their sectionalized teaching responsibilities), and consulted my specialist knowledge, all to reinforce a position in a particular conflict that might have arisen.

4. A substitute member of staff. Given that a fairly large staff will frequently have some absentees, and that the loss of 'free' time to fill in for them is so traumatic it was not surprising that pressure should be put on me to help out there. It was a matter of reciprocal obligations. I wanted to observe a form's lessons, which included one with the senior master. The following day, he asked me to register a form and collect their dinner money and fill in for an absent teacher for a double lesson with the 4th year bottom stream Maths. If there was a touch of 'touché' about this, I was able the following day to decline his invitation to do substitutions on the excuse that I was too busy. My own survival strategy was acknowledged with 'you're learning boyo, you're learning.' To partake in the hidden pedagogy further to the official administration of the school, I took to be a welcome sign of arrival at the strategic heart of the school.

5. A fellow human, who shared in the company of both teachers and pupils. I felt this to be the most important aspect of my involvement, as perhaps will be clear from the analysis later. Whether reliving 'laughs' or sharing boredom with the pupils, partaking of staffroom merriment or exchanging grumbles, drinking in the pub with various groups of staff, chatting with pupils in playground, corridors and some in their own homes - in all these respects I felt very much 'involved' in the scene and in the action.

I was also 'involved' by previous experience. Having recently taught for over ten years in State secondary schools, I felt that participation in an official role was unnecessary. With some understanding already of school life, the teacher's subjective experience, hidden agendas and in-group behaviour and strategies, I felt that I might be in a position to capitalize on the advantages of participant observation, without having to suffer the difficulties. The difficulties mainly arise from becoming inundated with the responsibilities of the job, and over-involved emotionally in power struggles and survival strategies, which can lead to physical, mental and nervous strain, 'going native' and deep problems of role conflict and ethics. While I did not entirely avoid these problems, I did feel that they were lessened, and made more negotiable. My previous experience also facilitated access. Participation is often a bargaining counter in gaining entry for where human resources are scarce, it is an aid to the

institution. But as one teacher told me, 'The staff put great trust in your teaching experience. They don't see you as one of these boffins riding roughshod through the place and making a nonsense of it all. You know what it's about.' In fairness, I do not know how many staff contributed to this view, or how long it was maintained. The first paper I produced, I circulated to the whole staff. It met with a mixed response, from very supportive to very critical, which reflected, as I discovered, staff personalities and/or ideologies. I accepted the practical fact that I could not present the same face to all the people all of the time, and that from then on I had stronger relations with some, and weaker relations with others. It is another indication of becoming part of the scene, and how one's own interaction in it pulls one in certain directions.

Questions of validity

Accounts emerging from participant observation work are often accused of being impressionistic, subjective, biased and idiosyncratic. Interestingly, from the interactionist point of view, much so-called 'hard' data is suspect in that often statistical accounts have been accepted as data without seeking to uncover the criteria and processes involved in their compilation. (Cicourel 1968, Douglas, 1971).

First, we should note that we are not dealing with absolutes - absolutely objective or subjective knowledge. As Bruyn has noted 'all social knowledge, in fact all human

communication, has both an objective and a subjective dimension to it.' (1966, p.264). Then we might be guided by Schutz:

'It is the essence of science to be objective, valid not only for me, or for me and you and a few others, but for everyone, and that scientific propositions do not refer to my private world but to the one and unitary life-world common to us all.'

(1960, p.205)

As scientific researchers this is what interests us, and is one of the ways in which we differ from novelists and journalists. The work of, for example, Henry (1963), Smith and Geoffrey (1968) and Mead (1934), show this interest in generalisable patterns of behaviour. Their relationship with the individual's 'personal', as opposed to his 'social' properties, is expressed by Jackson: 'Each major adaptive strategy is subtly transformed and given a unique expression as a result of idiosyncratic characteristics of the student employing it.' (1968, p.15). The researcher must seek the common properties of the strategies before or through the veil put up by their transformation. This is the import of point 3, above.

This raises two important questions - how can we be sure a) of generalisability (external validity), and b) that what we 'discover' is the genuine product, and not tainted by our presence or instrumentation (internal validity)?

On the first question it might be instructive to refer to a point made by Swift about sociological generalization. While

statistically significant results apply in general to a whole population, they might not apply on the individual level. (1973, p.). Yet, while all classrooms for instance differ, they all have something in common. As Hamilton and Delamont put it - 'Through the detailed study of one particular context it is still possible to clarify relationships, pin-point critical processes and identify common phenomena. From these, abstracted summaries and general concepts can be formulated.' (Hamilton and Delamont, 1974). I shall elaborate on this shortly when I discuss theory.

How applicable might these findings be to other schools? There are two different approaches to ethnography. There are those who see it as exclusively idiographic, that is to say descriptive of particular situations; these emphasize the holistic nature of ethnography and the distinctive nature of information discovered, which consequently is not covered by the assumptions of statistical assessment. It does not, in itself, therefore, permit generalization, though it might serve as a basis. As we have seen earlier, the situation is fluid, emergent, consisting of multiple realities which are in constant negotiation. There are no 'truths' to be discovered, or 'proofs' to be made, rather the aim is greater understanding of the social action in the situation under study. One's descriptions might be full of content, meanings, style and pattern, features which are not easily quantifiable.

On the other hand, there are those who prefer to see it as

nomothetic, that is to say, generalizing, comparative, theoretical. There are a number of ways we can generalize through ethnography. We can, for example, take an area of special interest, say a curriculum innovation, and carry out intensive studies of it within several schools; then, as the study reveals certain particular aspects of interest concerning the innovation, widen the sample of schools. Because the focus is narrower, the base of operations can be wider. Then we could accumulate case studies of particular features, aspects or areas, such as the classroom, the 'express stream', school assemblies. Or one can move from the study of small-scale items to larger-scale in a logical and interlocking sequence, for example from a school class to a year group or sub-culture, to a school, to a community. Occasionally, participant observations have been quantified though more usually by 'quasi-statistics'. (Becker, 1970). For instance, observations may frequently be implicitly numerical, without lending themselves to actual counting. One might observe that in one lesson, most of the class pay attention for most of the time, while in another they do not, or one might discover, by talking to people, that a few, some or many of them hold certain views or have certain concerns. This all involves frequency and distribution. My own view is that 'idiographic' and 'nomothetic' approaches are not mutually exclusive, and that we can have both rich and intensive description and generalizability. As far as schools are concerned, one can work from the other way round, that is to say, select a 'typical' school, class or group, using such indices as

numbers, type of school, curriculum, area, neighbourhood, sex, age, social mix and so on. The more 'representative' the school, the greater the chances of the external validity of the results. There are many schools like my study school, with similar structural and cultural patterns, and forms of interaction. It follows from my theoretical framework, as elaborated in Chapter 1 that there must be some common features and some idiosyncratic ones. Generalisability is strengthened as the theory is strengthened, and this might be done in a number of ways - by more case-studies of schools, by other forms of empirical evidence which bear on the theory, or parts of it, by improving the internal logic of the theory, or increasing the explanatory power of its parts, and not least, in the reader's head as he deploys his own knowledge and experience of such institutions.

On the second question of internal validity, the participant observer claims to score highly. He uses a battery of methods both to reveal and explore and to cross-check accounts. Some of these might be 'unobtrusive measures'. (Webb, et al. 1966). Most methods imply 'reaction', that is the subjects are required to 'react' to a stimulus, be it a questionnaire, an interview or if the researcher is observing, his mere presence may affect behaviour (as, for example, when observing a teacher in the classroom). Unobtrusive measures are non-reactive. They include studying reports and records, children's schoolwork, assuming a disguised participant role, and observation through a

one-way mirror. Clearly, some are ethically suspect, and no-one would dream of using one of the most powerful unobtrusive devices - bugging - since that would prejudice the whole outcome. It is more in the spirit of the enterprise to work oneself into acceptance as a member of a group, so that one's presence is 'obtrusive' only as a member of the group. There one is bound by the general norms and rules of social conduct, and is less likely to end up being sent to Coventry (as has happened to several), or to prison, or perhaps being tarred and feathered!

The participant observer is at the centre of the action where he can find more out, and as a member of a social system he is privy to a great deal of information. He can cause things to happen, explore promising leads and reformulate his problem as he goes along. He will be as unobtrusive as a researcher as he can, for he wants to sample the action 'as it is' - he wants his material to be 'valid'.

It is common knowledge that schools put on 'special performances' for the public. The researcher is unlikely to see the school 'as it is' for some considerable time. I was aware of three stages of access in my own research. When I first went to the school, I was shown carefully pre-selected scenes and witnessed 'educationist' performances. This was the public, outer face of the school in its Sunday clothes. After a few weeks, this rather strict control and staged performance was relaxed, and this special 'front' was abandoned. I was allowed more freedom,

people took less notice of me, and went about their business less self-consciously. But only after more time had elapsed did I reach the third and most rewarding stage, when they accepted me and began to confide in me as a member. Had I not reached this third stage, I would have had a limited, and possibly distorted view of members' perspectives. How do we know when we have reached this stage? It is largely a matter of one's sensitivities, but the experiences of others helps. Janes, for example, found five such levels, their range corresponding with my own. (Janes, 1961). He will also consistently be applying certain criteria. He will be aware of levels of access, shades of knowledge and opinion, rhetoric and ideology, reliability of informants, plausibility of accounts, the difference between what people say and what people do (Deutscher, 1973), the difference between subjective and objective, and members' 'cognitive filters'. (Dean and Whyte, 1958). He will recognise that we act, either verbally or overtly, in response to the symbolic meaning the object has for us in the given situation, and that he might not be viewed in the same way by all the members all of the time.

The researcher learns a great deal through 'informants'. In a sense they are fellow participant observers pooling their knowledge. If he is lucky he will find some 'key informants'. The classic example is 'Doc' in Whyte's 'Street Corner Society':

'That's right. You tell me what you want to see, and we'll arrange it. When you want some information, I'll ask for it, and you

listen. When you want to find out their philosophy of life, I'll start an argument and get it for you. If there's something else you want to get, I'll stage an act for you. Not a scrap you know, but just tell me what you want, and I'll get it for you.'

(Whyte, 1955, p.292)

I was fortunate in finding some key informants. They helped give perspective to the entire methodological front from the very beginning, for example to identify the nature of other people's talk and behaviour. One instance of this arises from the distinction between educationist and teacher talk (Keddie, 1971). It is not surprising that in some contexts there is a big difference between what teachers say they do and what they do. In a different context, they might say things that accord more with that performance. The gap will be wider if one does not progress beyond the first two levels of access, and it might be difficult to spot if there were no informants. Similarly, key informants can alert us to alternative explanations of the talk and behaviour of others that we perhaps have no other means of knowing about, so that we can get a grip of the various rhetorics presented to us, and how consciously and seriously they are held. It helps to have various kinds of informants. The more they constitute a cross-section of the population in question, the easier we might feel about the danger of bias. I was lucky in being able to forge close ties not only with the reformist left-wing Art teacher and the libertarian Social Studies man, but with the traditional-conservative head of Games, who had

academic aspirations, and the traditional-liberal Humanities teacher. On the important temporal dimension also, informants provide a sense of history, interpreting present events as part of a long, on-going process.

Interviews of one sort or another figure very prominently in participant observation, but they are usually unstructured and cross-validated. For example, interviewing head teachers is a particularly difficult task in terms of validation. This is because, as a general rule, the higher up a hierarchy we go, the more role-bound we become. We might never, in fact, proceed beyond the first stage of access with the head teacher. We then have to decide what 'status' to assign to what he tells us. For a start, we can reduce the formality of the situation, by not interviewing systematically, not recording or taking notes, and working for some kind of rapport. I tried, as Cicourel recommends, to colour interviews with the headmaster by my reactions as little as possible, and worked to 'elaborate his meanings.' (Cicourel, 1964). Secondly, we can seek the benefit of other vantage points. If, for instance, you were interested in his policy with regard to new intakes, it would be as well if you could attend the various meetings that would be held with parents, pupils and teachers, and to talk to them about it and how they interpret his policy, apart from 'observing' aspects of the policy in action as they chanced to happen. I did this with respect to the processes of 'subject choice' and 'school reports'. The idea is simply to bring as many forms to bear on the issue

as possible. The same idea lies behind the technique of 'triangulation'. (Cicourel, 1964, Denzin, 1970). If, for example, one wishes to study a particular lesson, the triangle would begin with discussing with the teacher what he planned to do; the second point would be observation of the lesson; the third, post facto discussion with the teacher in which he considered the lesson and his initial plans, thus completing the triangle. Sometimes the sociologist as analyst takes the place of the third stage (Keddie, 1971), or is omitted altogether. My own view is that he should encompass triangulation if possible, but not in exchange for his own interpretation.

At least we might more readily identify with the headteacher's culture than with the pupils', and the road to 'understanding' with them might be a longer one. In practical terms, I am thinking of 'understanding' as 'shared meanings, when one feels part of the culture and can interpret words and gestures as they do.' (Wax, 1971). Labov has shown how some of the low-level, monosyllabic response from some pupils might arise from the asymmetrical interview situation, whereas amongst their friends they can be most verbal and articulate. (Labov, 1969).

The problem of putting them at their ease cannot be met by the normal forms of proclaiming anonymity, universality and impersonality, disclaiming teacher and associate identity, and trying to get across to them in words that this is their platform. My own attempted solution was to situationally

make it their platform. This I tried to do by having conversation with them in friendship groups. I would go to a class at the beginning of a day, with the permission of the teacher concerned, of course, and arrange a timetable for the day, seeing groups of about four pupils in double-period slots. Pupils were invariably split up into groups when I entered. If they were large groups, I asked them to split themselves up. Pairs of pupils I asked to invite another pair along. This technique, I believe, had several advantages. The company of like-minded fellows helped to put them at their ease. The bond between them and the way it was allowed to surface shifted the power balance in the discussion situation in their direction. As long as my interventions were not too intrusive, it might facilitate the establishment of their norms, and I might become privy to their culture, albeit in rather a rigged way. Other advantages were that they acted as checks, balances and prompts to each other. Inaccuracies were corrected, incidents and reactions recalled and analysed. From these talks I was cued into the pupil experiences that I shall discuss later - being 'shown-up', being 'bored', 'having a laugh', 'working', and so on.

This leads me to consider what these discussions actually did, in a Garfinkelian sense. (1967). Firstly, they did provide me with information, and I think the structure of the group facilitated this. Pupils volunteered information in the company of their friends, and often to them rather than to me in the context of ongoing exchanges with them,

that I would not otherwise have been privy to. At other times, they prompted each other - 'Go on, tell him,' - 'What about when you...' There is another side to the unstructured, naturalistic, group identification approach of course. More forthright individuals can dominate discussions and there is a danger that the outcomes can be biased in favour of the most outspoken and aggressive individuals. If we couple with this the pupils' natural tendency in a conflict situation to regard an external interviewer as a kind of relief agency, we get an idea of the kind of bias that can creep in. I felt that, on occasions, the actual incidence of the discussion made grievances. People can talk themselves and others into a temper, or into laughter for that matter, and sometimes I felt there was a thin divide between the two. This clearly has repercussions for their representations of past events. Such discussions should be regarded as data rather than sources of information. Thus misrepresentations, outrageous lies, melodrama, put-ons can all, in fact, be turned to research advantage, as long as they are identified. Perhaps the best examples again are in connections with laughter. Many of the discussions held with me were 'laughs' in their own right, that is to say they were generated in the discussion, and possibly the particular configuration of circumstances subscribing to it as reported by them had not led to laughter previously. The discussion thus became part of their school life rather than a pause in it. Also of course the laughter is the important element. For added ribaldry, the facts will probably have suffered

some distortion, but that is a natural concomitant of laughter-making.

Surrendering the initiative can lead to results that are very time-absorbing, tedious and discomfoting. There is a great deal of repetition. Occasionally, people wander off into peripheral monologues. I remember one boy describing at great length his plans for becoming a jockey; a couple of girls their experiences with a gang of Hell's Angels in Luton; several risque discussions with both boys and girls about sex and fornication. This last is clearly very relevant to my interest in the pupils' cultural experience with their environment. But it reminds me of another of those ethical problems. In a sense, talk is legitimation. For me to talk about some things with pupils might have the effect of legitimating them in their eyes. Even 'listening' can go half way towards this. Smoking, fornication, teacher-victimization, all figure prominently in the pupils' school life, and thus we need to know about them. But it can be uncomfortable at times, while operating under the auspices, enjoying the hospitality of and making friendships with those who make a career of trying to eliminate these activities. The solution of course is to take sides, and if one is going to identify successfully with a culture, it is imperative to do so. But one does it as researcher, not as political agent, and this enables identification with any cultural form in the school without the charge of hypocrisy. This leads me on to something else I felt these discussions did, which touches on the

'mysterious empathy' I spoke of earlier.

Redfield described how the form in which he came to understand the Mayan culture came to be phenomenologically constituted in his experience, and in some ways I went through a similar process. (Redfield, 1967). In the early days of my study, I recorded my impressions of the cultural experiences of the pupils. I noted down what the teachers did, what the pupils did, and what they told me about it. As this was during the first stage of access it had only limited value. Later, after many discussions, when I had become what Janes calls a personalized member and had developed a certain rapport with the pupils, I was keyed in to their experience via talk, and it was the talk which led to the empathy. (Janes, 1961). This might be already clear from the 'laughter' examples. Having listened for example to their accounts of how they occupied themselves during school assembly, it was easy to do some of the same things and share in the fun. Obviously, one catches something in laughter that is not necessarily expressed in words. The same is true of other experiences, when the talk assumes an onomatopoeic quality. I am thinking here of what I discovered to be the main impact of the school on one group of pupils - boredom. The point I am making is that the way in which they expressed it cued me in to the actual experience of it. One of my one or two outstanding memories from the enormous mass of experiences at the school is that of pupils talking to me about boredom. They managed to convey, in a very few words largely, years of

crushing ennui that had been ingrained into their bones. Great wealth of expression was got into 'boring', 'boredom', 'it's so bo-or-ering here'. The word, I realise now, is onomatopoeic. I could never view lessons in company with that group again without experiencing that boredom myself. They would occasionally glance my way in the back corner of the room with the same pained expression on their faces, and I knew exactly what they meant. This then provided a platform for my understanding of the school life of one group of pupils. The group conversations also enabled me to distinguish between groups fairly easily, a division which was a basic feature of the model developed of pupil experience of the school.

In my use of talk, the criteria for selecting extracts in my accounts are basically four - validity, typicality, relevance and clarity. I have used extensive quotation - the subjects do a great deal of speaking for themselves. The themes are theirs, the categories are theirs ('Having a laugh', 'Being shown up', different kinds of 'choice', and see the teacher aphorisms beside the sub-headings in Chapter 9, on survival strategies). The sociologist acts first as a roving microphone, then as a book-keeper and filing clerk. By presenting a sample from his files, he can give a tidy, descriptive account organized round certain features which will have a value in its own right. These member typifications are then subjected to analysis. They are two distinct processes, and ideally should not be confused. The 'rhetoric of interaction' should not be coloured by the

analysis, and should be available for alternative analyses.
(Ball, 1965).

The Generation of Theory

Some do consider the chief merit of ethnography to be 'good reporting, and that ethnographic facts clearly and accurately presented are likely to survive the theoretical frame of reference of the man who revealed them.' (Kutsche, 1971, p.957). Others might engage in purely descriptive work, but in clear recognition that it is in the service of a 'grander' design. Wolcott, for example, is satisfied as an ethnographer if someone is willing to use one of his accounts 'in an attempt to create some larger scientific superstructure. That's what these bricks are for.' (Wolcott, 1975, p.124). Robinson pleads for more long-term case studies of classrooms and schools which will 'help us generate theoretical statements having a wider applicability than the local classroom.' (Robinson, 1974, p.263).

Preformed categories and hypotheses can prejudice the outcome of ethnography.

'If the observer focusses his attention on specific hypotheses, or questions, or categories, he will see meanings within the framework of these pre-conditioning factors, but he will miss other meanings...which could be more important to people in the context of a culture.'

(Bruyn, 1966, p.p.265-6)

Others think that sociology has become theoretically and methodologically hidebound, imprisoning the 'sociological imagination' and recommend dispensing with traditional

methodological requirements and concentrating on the 'realities of society'. (Mills, 1959, Philips, 1973). This, it should be said, would be in the service of new insights which themselves might go towards the making of new theoretical structures, which would embrace more of the problems which interest us today. These theoretical structures could then guide research for as long as they were considered relevant.

Thus ethnographers often prefer to proceed by 'induction'. That is to say, rather than seeking evidence to support or refute hypotheses derived from a priori theory (the hypothetico-deductive method), they seek to induce concepts and theory from the data as it is revealed. This theory is 'discovered' and is 'grounded' in the situational facts (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Glaser and Strauss distinguish between 'substantive' and 'formal' theory.

'By substantive theory, we mean that developed for a substantive, or empirical area of sociological inquiry, such as patient care, race relations, professional education, delinquency, or research organizations. By formal theory, we mean that developed for a formal, or conceptual area of sociological inquiry, such as stigma, deviant behaviour, formal organization, socialization, status congruency, authority and power, reward systems, or social mobility. Both types of theory may be considered as "middle-range". That is they fall between the "minor working hypotheses" of everyday life and the "all-inclusive" grand theories.'

(1967, p.p.32-3)

Broadly speaking, there are two types of focus (a) detailed and narrowly focussed theorizing about micro-features and (b) attempts to relate or fuse generated middle-range theory with grand theory.

In this thesis, I concentrate in the main on the former, but occasionally, in purely exploratory fashion, I explore the linkages between interactionists and structuralists, the gap between the 'minor working hypotheses' of everyday life and 'grand theory'. Chapter 4 is perhaps the most detailed contained example, but a briefer one, which will serve description here, is my discovery and study of the 'showing up syndrome' discussed in Chapter 8. Having negotiated access to the stage where, if not exactly privy to innermost councils, one is permitted to witness normal processes, data collection begins in earnest. All the techniques of fieldwork are brought into play (observing, interviewing, examining, reports, reflection etc.), and the tapes, notes and records grow quickly and rather chaotically. If recorded faithfully, they will reflect the muddle and messiness of everyday life. Ultimately however, I became aware of regularities in the pupils' conversations with me which provided certain 'themes'.

What governs their appearance is frequency of occurrence, strength in terms of cataclysmic effect on people or strangeness in terms of paradoxes, inconsistencies, and deviations from routine. In this case, all of these seemed to apply. One of their preoccupations was an

aversion to being 'shown-up' by teachers. Satisfied that this was acutely felt and common enough to warrant further investigation, I engaged in 'theoretical sampling', that is I purposely began to seek and accumulate material from all sources which bore on the phenomenon,

- (a) to examine the extent of the possibilities,
- (b) to see how well the facts fitted,
- (c) to examine their common properties and
- (d) to investigate its theoretical potential.

Inevitably for a while, a certain amount is tentative and there is a deliberate stretching of the limits, and experimentation (viz. in the 'mind', not in the situation). This first distillation of material and theme was, for me, an essential stage. During it, triangulation, and all the rest of the participant observer's armament of techniques continue.

I constructed a typology, examined the internal structure of the process, considered its functions and results, and who was involved. Much of this was at the level of substantive theory, but some formal theory came in in relation to functions and who was involved. This is because the functions are connected with general sociological concepts like power, socialization and status, and could therefore be related to other contexts. 'Who was involved' led to a consideration of other distinctive features they might have in common, and a tentative identification with one of the pedagogical paradigms outlined in the literature and an

elaboration of a 'paternalist' style of control. This is the point where personality meets system, and there are clear opportunities for a related analysis at the wider level, possibly with social control theories of some kind.

Here, then, is a possible connection with grand theory, followed through from one feature of interaction clearly identified and analysed at ground level.

The stages of my research match Becker's three stages of field analysis - (a) the selection and definition of problems, concepts and indices, (b) the check on the frequency and distribution of phenomena, and (c) the incorporation of individual findings into a model of the organization under study. (Becker, 1958). I would add a fourth stage - (d) a consideration of the relationship of this model and its component parts to external forms and structures. Of course, I have not 'proved' the connection with any grand theory - my theory might well have to be revised in the light of subsequent research and analysis. But this is perfectly natural in 'analytic induction', the strategy that 'directs the investigator to formulate generalizations that apply to all instances of the problem with which he is concerned.' (Denzin, 1970, p.194).

Clearly, the link with 'grand theory' is impossible to 'ground' in the same sense as middle-range theory. One tends to merely add to or subtract from its plausibility. This is not surprising since much grand theory is incapable

of verification in the same way.

A danger in participant observation 'immersion' is 'macro-blindness'. Deep involvement in the scene can blind to external constraints, and the researcher might find himself explaining things in their own terms, when more powerful forces operating on the action lie elsewhere. This is the other side of the coin to that wherein he takes existing theory and concepts as his guide and runs the risk of blinding himself to the more significant and interesting parts of the action. Sharp and Green claim they have demonstrated how structural factors are reproduced in interaction, and how interactions are socially structured by the wider context (1976, p.218-9). Interestingly and as with several others, it was only when they 'had left the field that many of the critical insights emerged and with them the crystallization of the overall approach to our accounting.' Thus they were not engaged in 'grounded theorising' as discussed above. They did not 'saturate' their categories, nor 'induce' their theoretical propositions.

Hargreaves et al. in their book on school deviance keep more to the grounded theory rubric, but more easily so since the authors invoke no structural theory. (Hargreaves, Hestor and Mellor, 1976).

A collective and ongoing enterprise

In some respects, participant observation is an intensely individualistic task, and many field studies give an

impression of 'hit and run', that is gaining access to an institution, 'cracking' its secrets, and then escaping before the ethical problems catch up, to write the definitive version in the sanctuary of one's own study. However, this kind of research, like any other, is a collective enterprise, and, equally, is an ongoing one.

For example, after the first distillation of material, in pursuing internal validity and investigating theoretical potential, both require the participation of other people. i) requires the aid of people in the institution, and of others in the profession elsewhere. Of course, there are the difficulties mentioned earlier. In the 'survival strategy' thesis, for example, in Chapter 9, if teachers have constructed defence mechanisms which protect their exposure they will hardly countenance an interpretation which threatens to undermine this reality. (Is this the source of the gulf which exists between teachers and educational researchers, rather than the latter's tendency to abstraction?) If still bound by commitment problems, their interpretation is sure to differ, being governed by those very same criteria which the theme may claim to expose. After all, they do have to continue teaching in the school. We would expect, therefore, not so much a confirmation of views of the paper, as further illustrations of survival strategies in practice. However, there might be some teachers in the school who are not likely to see themselves so threatened. For instance, a) those who are not included personally in the examples, b) those of low commitment, c) those who contribute to certain ideologies (liberal

reformists, deschoolers, liberationists), and d) those with whom the researcher might have forged certain personal links which transcend the institutionalized role. These might hold views quite contrary to the researcher but the personal bond is strong enough to stand the strain. They are a useful counterbalance to the liberationist ideologies. The researcher is also interested in external validity - generalizability, and so he circulates his paper among the profession.

ii) To investigate the theoretical possibilities, he will show the paper to colleagues in the usual way, inviting their comments, and consult the literature, thus generating new thoughts and ideas, while locating his work within a trend, or a genre, and the discipline as a whole. The theoretical sampling of the first stage continues, hopefully aiding refinement of the categories. He will discard those that are thin ('unsaturated'), and he will rule out examples that are problematic. The explanation - the overall theoretical import - may be one-sided; it might not be intended as a complete explanation of all that goes on (i.e. all the phenomena) in that institution, nor even as a complete explanation of the phenomena it presents. I much prefer to view society, and man in his relationships, as complex, manifold, loosely-structured, and quite often contradictory. To take a one-sided view is legitimate practice in sociology, and is accepted as contributing to a general scheme. But as a one-sided view, the other sides of the view might come to prevail in some respects as the research proceeds. For example, is a 'fraternizing' teacher

aiming simply to pass the time more equitably, or seeking to facilitate the learning situation? Clearly he could be doing either and often there must be a thin divide. This must be allowed for in the new model.

A second account of the phenomenon is thus produced drawing on the literature for both theoretical and empirical support, and comparing alternative theories. Yet this is by no means the final stage. What we have so far in the research process is a) access, b) immersion, c) idea, d) distillation, e) consolidation. In a sense, this last 'consolidation' might be seen as a beginning. In fact it is the beginning of survey research, which assumes all these other preliminaries. This, in fact, might be the style of future work, some kind of quantification, whether done statistically, or by an accumulation of case studies. How widespread is this amongst our profession as a whole, what proportion of teachers' work is to be interpreted in this way, and how are the distributions affected by other factors - type of school, age of teacher, school subject, ecological factors, career structures and so on.

Together with this kind of extension must go further theoretical refinement and underpinning. Its value as a model must be put to the test, and this can only be done by more ethnographic work. The 'consolidation' phase might raise as many questions as it answers. For example, we need to explore in more detail the nature of commitment, how it varies in kind and degree among teachers, and according to

what factors, and how it relates to institutional and social change. The whole needs broadening to the realms of formal sociology. This leads to a new level of abstraction, and more general applicability so that it can more easily be applied to all walks of life. Clearly, one suspects strongly, that 'commitment', 'survival' and 'accommodation', are just as constraining and determining in hospitals, prisons, town halls, supermarkets, factories, universities. It is a feature of modern society, which in its development of technocracy and mass institutions has forced the human consciousness through all manner of convolutions. It is our task to trace those convolutions, and not be seduced by them.

CHAPTER THREE

LOWFIELD SECONDARY SCHOOL

The school

Before presenting the analysis, I shall give a brief thumbnail sketch of the school in which the research was conducted. My aim is to convey an impression of what kind of school it was, and what were its essential processes, through the eyes and in the language of a quasi-member of staff. This is the manifest picture of the school, the semi-official image, and it is the essential starting point before we move to deeper sociological analysis.

I call the school 'Lowfield Secondary School', which, of course, is a pseudonym, as are the names of teachers and pupils which appear in the text later. The fact that it was a secondary modern might appear to date the school, but as I shall show, its status was irrelevant to my concerns, its basic structures and processes being common amongst secondary schools generally. Built in 1956, with 560 boys and girls on roll and 30 teachers, the school serves a rural area in the Midlands which includes some urbanized villages on the boundaries of a larger manufacturing town, and several small village communities. It is well accommodated, with adequate classrooms, laboratories, domestic science rooms, needlecraft and commerce rooms, lecture theatre, hall, library, an impressive technical block, gymnasium, swimming pool, and generous playing fields. The pupils came mainly from working-class homes, parents working mainly in light industry, farmwork or service occupations in the nearby large town; though quite a large minority of parents were in clerical or professional work, or relatively senior

positions in industry.

At times, there is an atmosphere of balmy bliss at Lowfield. And certainly one of the predominant impressions the school makes is one of certain 'ease'. Shortly after my arrival, the headmaster told me, 'They're all good children in this school. I've been headmaster here since 1956 and I've never had any trouble, any real trouble that is. They're not violent.' Another teacher, speaking of a group with the reputation of the 'worst' pupils in the school, said, 'They're not stropky - they just won't be motivated.' And another, with eight years' previous experience teaching in the nearby town where pupils were 'getting progressively rougher' found those at Lowfield 'very affable'. The generalized aims of the teachers which aided this affability were to make 'happy marriages', and the children 'decent citizens' as one teacher said, or 'good Christian gentlefolk' as the headmaster put it. At other times, the ease is tinged with despair, as the teachers seek to inspire and motivate what they see as a predominantly apathetic clientele.

'We get them from nine to four with one and a half hours off for lunch. How can we hope to change them from what they already are? They come here expecting to go to the factory. I wonder if what we're doing is consolidating the class structure, teaching them good middle-class ways of living, and others their place. "4L - you're 4L, 4A - you're 4A". I know there's got to be factory hands and dustbinmen, but they don't seem to realise there's possibilities beyond that, they're fated from the word go.'

The 'factory' referred to here is located in the village, makes car components and employs over two thousand people.

Inevitably, most of these went to Lowfield at one time or another, and in some ways its relationship with the school and the village is similar to those self-contained communities built on paternalistic lines during the 19th century around the factory. Its owner, for example, had a long, and reputedly, very influential association with the school, including a lengthy period as Chairman of the governors. It is still the major employer of Lowfield school leavers and among several families appears to be accepted as equally as school as an inevitable sphere of life. The headmaster spoke of 'the dead-end prospects of these kids. Many of their parents saw the top of the ladder as being the tool-room in the local factory.' Thus it was seen by the teachers primarily not as a beneficial agency providing employment and prospects to the people of the village, but as a breeder of apathy among pupils and parents as far as schoolwork is concerned. 'You needn't ask what most of the staff think of ROSLA. The kid's attitude is, 'we're going to the factory anyway, what the hell's use is a couple of C.S.E's to us?' Even, at the time of writing, with unemployment beginning to bite in the area, a deep-seated apathy lives on, suggesting more pervasive and elusive referents than 'the factory'. This lack of motivation, whilst primarily associated with factors promoting 'ease' was thus also responsible at times for the opposite atmosphere, a sense of urgency. For the teachers, from time to time, expressed concern in various ways to inspire to possibly better things, to create awareness of new opportunities, and to stimulate and develop possibly

unsuspecting talents. Apart from which, low motivation can produce another problem, worrying to the teacher's conscience. While it might be part of a syndrome of factors promoting easy relationships, it is reckoned to be an unhealthy habit of mind associated with other undesirable traits and attitudes. So that, although enjoying and appreciating the benefits in the form of good relationships, the teachers seek to alter the base on which they rest. On such occasions there is a sense of the irresistible force, in the form of teachers' best intentions and indomitable willpower, meeting the immovable object in the form of the pupils' intransigence. But running beside this, contemporaneously, is a sense of fraternity. 'It's impossible not to like them,' one teacher told me, after a particular unsuccessful lesson. 'One of the things I shall miss most is the teachers,' said one particularly rebellious pupil. 'They're not such a bad lot, really.'

However, this pertained only during 'time off' moments. The school is part of a national system, and its rating is firmly governed by certification. This determined the orientation and organization of the school. The school entered candidates for both 'O' level and 'C.S.E.' examinations. Officially, pupils were placed in three mixed ability groups in the first and second years, with setting in English and Mathematics. In practice, there was a kind of disguised streaming, which was made manifest in the third year on the basis of pupils' ability in English. These graded forms, 3a, 3b and 3c, then studied a more examination-orientated

curriculum than in the previous two years (for example, Chemistry, Physics and Biology and R.I. instead of 'Integrated Studies' and examination syllabuses were actually begun by some) together with some vocational elements, such as Technical Drawing and Commerce. During the third year, a system of 'subject choice' operated, and pupils were allocated among four fourth year forms - two examination forms (4A and 4B), one commerce form (4C), and one non-examination form (4L). The examination forms were able to choose between various groups of fairly traditional subjects which enabled 'individual' timetables. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1

Examination Courses

In the fourth and fifth years courses are provided for both the examination and non-examination pupils. Examinations courses are offered in the following subjects:

'O' Level

English Language
English Literature
Mathematics
Chemistry
Physics
History
French
Woodwork
Metalwork
Engineering Drawing
Art
Domestic Science
Needlecraft

C.S.E.

English
Mathematics
Chemistry
Physics
Biology
General Science
History
Geography
French
Commercial Arithmetic
Shorthand
Typewriting
Office Practice
Woodwork
Metalwork
Engineering Drawing
Art
Domestic Science
Needlecraft
Music

English, Mathematics and four more subjects of the pupil's choice form the examination course. As the examination and non-examination courses form an integrated programme in the fourth and fifth years, less able pupils are not required to offer all six subjects to examination standard.

The Commerce form, composed entirely of girls, had a mainly secretarial diet of typing and book-keeping; the non-examination form had 'block' activities, with large doses of social studies, environmental studies, practical activities and games. In addition, the school ran a 'Community Service' programme in which senior pupils visited local hospitals, centres for the physically and mentally handicapped, community centres, playgroups and old people's homes. The school had no 6th form. Pupils wishing to continue studies transferred either to the Grammar School or Technical College in the nearby town.

The school was run on traditional lines with no frills or pretensions to progressivism or any other unusual or ambitious projects. The basic unit was the form, and the form teacher. Each year had a year tutor, responsible for the pastoral care of the year. A traditional 'House' system, mainly but not entirely geared to games, was the basis of much of the school's social activities. And all of the teachers, without exception, taught traditional subject matter by traditional methods.

'We're all caught up in the rush for certification - staff, pupils and parents - now more than ever,' one teacher told me. 'I resent it rather. Once upon a time, and I've been here

sixteen years, we took things more easily, kids just transferred to the Grammar or the Tech, no fuss.' This may reflect a general trend in the increasing emphasis on results. But it was exacerbated in the case of Lowfield, by an impending change in status. Under the proposals for the reorganization of secondary education in the area, it was scheduled to accept a six form fully comprehensive entry in the near future. It was anticipated that ultimately accommodation would be required for some 1,000 pupils in the 11-18 age group. Pupils who would previously have gone to the Grammar in town and whose prospects in life were definitely not 'dead-end', as long as they could achieve the necessary qualifications, would go to Lowfield. This made for an interesting situation at the school. On the one hand there was a feeling of the 'end of the road' about the school in its present state aided by the incumbent headmaster's impending retirement, due before the change. Its roots were solidly in the tripartite past, its teachers doing an honest and thorough job as best they could with recalcitrant material, with no frills, a minimum of experimentation, and firmly based on tradition, with its Assemblies, 'House' system, prefectorial system, school uniform and rules, protestant ethic-type morals, and largely congenial personal relationships. On the other hand, there was an air of hope and expectation, tinged at times with frustration. The hope was for a new era, more resources, greater fulfilment, better career prospects with the advent of the grammar-type children. The sense of frustration came with reflecting on the realities, what they saw as the

lack of a forward looking policy on the part of the head, uncertainty about their own positions, a general anxiety about the unknown, and above all the increased pressure these teachers felt under to produce 'results' to legitimate the school in the eyes of parents of prospective grammar-type children. In the past, it had been accepted that they had had a tough job, dealing as they were with 'failures'; in the future, they would properly be expected to achieve much with a fully comprehensive intake; but in the meantime, as one teacher put it, 'we're expected to get blood out of stones and make silk purses out of sows' ears.' For the transitional period then the teachers felt called on, indeed pressed on by the headmaster, to make superhuman efforts to make the school appear a respectable repository for 'bright' children. The sort of effort, which largely led to 'artificial' results, and which one reserved for prize days, or other occasions of public presentation, tolerable because of its rarity, was now demanded continually in one's day-to-day teaching.

These contrasts of ease and urgency, hope and despair, excitement and frustration provided me with points of focus during my research in the school. I was concerned initially with the very broad question 'What do people do in school and what do they do to each other?' With such an open approach, no specific criteria were laid down for choice of school, other than accessibility and typicality. As it happened, Lowfield was very accessible and ultra-typical in a sense. Pressure was put on the teachers to prosecute their

professional task with extra zeal; both that task, and the strategies which supported or cushioned it, were, I believe, highlighted in consequence. In turn, the pressures on the pupils being greater, their resources in coping were stretched to great limits, and appeared in sharper relief. Thus, though the school could be said to be going through a transitional phase, it was one in which, I believe, typical processes and interrelationships were revealed often in particularly vivid form.

Organization and Summary of the Thesis

Though I have given certain basic details about the school, this tells us little of how the school actually works behind the official facade. In Chapter 4, I seek to uncover some actual and basic processes and frameworks, the intentions behind them, and their fundamental relation to society, as revealed in the subject-choice process. The basic structure of the school, the relationship to it of the teachers, pupils and parents, and the connection between the internal processes of the school and the macro elements in society are all crystallized in the subject-choice process. In the official programme, it appears as the fulcrum of the pupil's school career. All before has been preparatory, all after is the real stuff of education on which life-chances depend - preparing for examinations and aligning for future jobs.

Parents are sensitive to this, and go through a period of high concern. They sense that it is an important step in life, and that there can be no turning back. For teachers,

too, for their peace of mind and future prospects, a lot hangs by the results. Not for nothing has this process become a considerable industry. At Lowfield, for example, it takes up the whole of the third term in the third year, and involves lectures, counselling, parents' meetings, examinations, and a high degree of personal commitment from most concerned. It all takes place in a cultivated atmosphere of 'choice'. The choice is to be the best informed possible, hence there is an enormous input of data from all quarters, aided by specialist advice, rehearsals of combinations and permutations of subjects, soul-searching and crystal-ball gazing, yielding the result most suitable for the individual pupil in the light of all known circumstances. However, an examination of the process revealed other factors more influential than pupils' interest, the most potent of them lying outside the school. In their approach to making the choice I found pupils used different frames of reference or 'group perspectives' in two broad groups, which could be systematically related to social class background. Teacher strategies in guiding pupils into making the 'right' choices were examined, and suggested to be contributing to a 'contest' system of education behind a meritocratic mask. Given the basic group perspectives of the pupils, located originally in different lifestyles according to different positions in the Social structure, the teachers could be held, albeit against their will, to be driving wedges more firmly between these divisions. The external factors so constrain the process that the notion of 'choice', so fashionable perhaps among progressive ideologies,

is almost the inversion of what actually occurs. At least, it operates within very narrow limits, within other decisions or consequences that are determined by other forces.

Pupils thus have different perceptions of school, it has different meanings for them and different impact upon them. Chapter 5 explores these differences further in the areas of curriculum, teachers and institution.

If the mainstream activity of the school has relevance for some only, and possibly only partial relevance for many of those, the question arises as to how they adjust. They do this in various ways. I have developed elsewhere a typology of pupil modes of adaptation, indicating the major ways in which pupils adjusted to school at Lowfield (Woods, 1977). In this thesis, I concentrate on the forms of experience encountered and developed within those adaptations. 'Work' was, unsurprisingly perhaps, a major category. In Chapter 6 I examine its properties from the pupils' point of view, and find it to be the product of a complicated mixture of values and attitudes. Since 'work' is the demand most frequently and intensely made by teachers of pupils, and since it is one which many pupils resist to some degree or other, at least at Lowfield, it promotes the most intensive negotiative activity. It is a fruitful area, therefore, for an interactionist study. But also, because of the importance of 'work' in people's lives generally, certain aspects of the study are suggestive of linkages with wider cultural and structural factors.

The second aspect, examined in Chapter 7, is what I discovered to be the most prominent feature of the school generated life-styles of those going through phases of the broadly dissonant modes of adaptation, indeed what might be regarded as the colonizing activity par excellence - 'having a laugh' - the 'hidden curriculum' of pupilhood. This study, as that of Chapter 5, is derived from conversations with 5L in the first place, but ultimately over two hundred pupils in the 3rd, 4th and 5th years. Both studies illustrate the degree and nature of the influence of the institutional framework of the school as a factor in pupil, and indeed teacher adaptations.

Chapter 8 strikes a sharp contrast, so typical of the ups and downs of school life - one moment, laughter and jollity and amicable relations all round, the next pain and suffering, degradation and humiliation. At Lowfield humiliation was acutely painful, a frequent occurrence, an overriding concern, and its practice suggestive of certain associations with teacher styles of pedagogy.

'Concern with dignity and degradation runs through the interviews. These teachers realize that if they refuse to humiliate their pupils, they will be considered ineffective.'

(Musgrove, 1974, p.166)

So comments Frank Musgrove on his talks with Rank-and-File teachers. They are

'humiliated by the power of children and by the power of headteachers, and feel degraded and brutalized by exercising power themselves. The real enemy is "the system".'

(Ibid, p.165)

Humiliation is the other side of the coin to laughter, and it is the other chief feature of many pupils' school lives. Quite often the balmy world of pupil adaptations is disrupted by excesses on the pupils' part or non-participation on the teachers. If, in their laughter in search of respect and dignity, meaning and identity, pupils foul official or tacit norms, the most customary antidote employed by teachers at Lowfield is a tactic deliberately aimed at undermining dignity and producing embarrassment, shame and degradation. In the pupils' terms it is 'showing them up', and this was by far the most painful experience, the most feared and detested, the biggest outrage against the human person in their school lives.

Chapters 9, 10 and 11 analyze what I take to be the major components of the teacher's activity - 'survival', 'professionalization', and 'being persons'.

At Lowfield, most teachers were mainly busy with basic techniques of survival. To take an example, it is essential for the teacher to have control in order to teach. But often the problem of control is so enormous as to be insoluble, and it becomes an end in itself - the only end. I was alerted to the pervasiveness of this problem, and the many latent ways teachers try to resolve it during my stay at Lowfield. Indeed, though individual teachers differ enormously in this respect, I was left with the feeling that 'survival' was undoubtedly the teachers' predominant activity

as a group, at least in the sense of demands on their time and energies. I examine this 'survival' aspect in Chapter 9.

Teachers are never more professional than when writing school reports. Reports are one way in which teachers appear as neutral professional mediators, rather like doctors pronouncing on the state of health of their clients and diagnosing what needs to be done, if anything, to improve it. But, taken against its initial reference - school aims and organization - the basic commodity is seen to be somewhat more variable than 'good health'. What the report indicates, in short, is how far the pupil measures up to a teacher's present intention, and that cannot always be taken for granted. Chapter 10 is aimed at uncovering some of those intentions.

If, however, we look for brilliance and invention, and sheer joie de vivre, it does not take place in the classroom at all, nor in any areas connected with the prosecution of the teacher's job. There is a striking amount of it in school, which one would not suspect from reading most sociological accounts, perhaps because it occurs mostly in the staffroom and other 'private areas'. Its chief manifestation is laughter.

A major theme of this thesis is that the institutional structure of the school does impose constraints and conditions on relationships which affectively removes them

from the 'personal' sphere. The mass nature of schooling, the heavily standardized and systematic requirements, the formal traditions of teaching, which emphasize role distance, firm discipline and routinization, the culture gap between most teachers and most children, and the natural strain amongst many of the latter against the purpose of the school; not to mention all the trappings of rooms, timetables, bells and rituals - all these items produce 'institutionalized man', and strive to produce 'institutionalized people'. The teachers do the same. Through laughter, they redeem their humanity.

This is not, of course, to say that all lessons and teacher-pupil contacts are humourless. Pupils 'have their laughs' and teachers 'fraternize', or use humour as an instrument of policy. (Walker and Goodson, 1974).

Teachers also take time off from their formal roles in 'asides' as it were, to joke with pupils, but for the most part, they are heavily constrained by circumstances. This is why, contrarily enough, it can sometimes be more 'pleasant' to teach a non-examination than an examination form. The latter requires total professional commitment. With the former, with only very vaguely defined aims, one can take 'time off' and be more human. Since there is nothing in the school for them, they are thrown back upon their personal human resources. Those teachers accepting, or at least sensing, this can indeed enter into a 'special' relationship with such forms, when all the usual criteria surrounding the teacher-pupil role are released; though conversely those who

contrive with too strict an interpretation of aims and roles are likely to have uncommon difficulty - they are not playing the same game. (Goffman, 1971).

For the most part however, teachers depart from desired identities when they leave the staffroom, bound for classrooms, and re-enter them when they return. Laughter is the passport back. It is the mechanism that restores them as persons, that puts a perspective on what has happened 'out there' to make it more manageable, that emphasizes individuality after the experience of depersonalized structures and faceless crowds, that recovers face, confidence, status, in short, one's identity as a person. This is why the staffroom is sacred; why in so many schools pupils are debarred and headmasters knock before entering. It is the teacher's private area, where he can reconstitute those elements of 'himself' without the tension-ridden interference of higher authority or conflictual opposition of pupils.

In fact, of course, much of the catharsis that takes place through laughter concerns those items. And not only do headmasters and his deputies and pupils impinge greatly on teachers and cause tension on their own rights, but the fact that they induce contrary tendencies and expectations sets up the biggest conflict of all for teachers, which they must resolve in some way, if they are to survive.

Laughter has this supremely important function of not

resolving conflict, but dissipating it, transforming it to a zone of reality where it doesn't matter any more. Through laughter, the teachers can resist the headmaster and cope with the pupils and thus do their job. Of all the contrasts, inconsistencies and divisions I experienced at Lowfield, I encountered none greater or sharper than this, between joyous laughter and soul-less despair. I examine staffroom and teachers as persons in Chapter 11.

In the final chapter, I reconsider the main themes of the study, and their interconnections. I attempt to demonstrate the relevance in relation to an empirical study of a typical secondary school in the English State system, and the fruitfulness, both for sociological theory and for present educational concerns, of a focus on the classic interactionist concepts of perspectives, contexts, strategies and identities. I summarize the various ways in which institutional factors, as opposed to external factors, have emerged throughout the study as influences on school processes. I then review the external factors suggested by certain aspects of the research. Finally, I conclude with some of the implications for educational practice, as I see them.

CHAPTER FOUR

PATTERNS OF CHOICE

I Introduction

Pupil and teacher strategies and adaptations take place within an institutional framework, which is related to the general educational system, which in turn is related to society. A perplexing question which will recur throughout the thesis, is how much those activities owe to purely institutional factors, and how much to external factors.

The difficulty lies not only in the point of linkage between micro and macro, but also in the diverse and often contradictory elements of school life. Thus, in our attempts to resolve the one, we may not do justice to the other. We either get a neat theoretical account which embraces part of school activity only, or an accurate and further description of school life, which is comparatively atheoretical. We rarely get both together.

Certain possible connections, which linked interactionist concepts like meaning-construction, perspectives and mediation to structural matters like the social class system and the school's role in society, occurred to me during the summer term of 1975, when I witnessed various aspects of Lowfield's subject choice system. This system also illustrated certain important properties of the school's overall organization, indeed, it could be represented as one process operating at the heart of the school, with implications for all its components, lending itself most readily to analysis. In this chapter, therefore, I depict the framework within which the action of subsequent chapters occur, suggesting

certain linkages between process and structure, using subject choice as a case study. Ultimately, however, the detailed study of action and process in these later chapters leads to the conclusion that this framework is not entirely sufficient to account for all the prominent areas of activity observed in the school, a deficiency I attempt to remedy in the final chapter.

The mode of exposition here will be to examine in turn, pupils', parents' and teachers' parts in the process of subject choice, ultimately looking at the implications for the school's relationship to society. First, however, I set out the model and the major concepts that I came to use in making sense of the materials. As far as method is concerned, briefly my own engagement at the school enabled me to monitor the process through the summer term, and to follow it up the next year. I talked to all the pupils in the third year, at least once, in interviews ranging from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours, and discussed freely with teachers from day to day. I sent a questionnaire to all parents of the 3rd year pupils, and visited as many as I could before the end of term (25%). (Reproduced as an Appendix). This involvement over a long period enabled me to cross check results, follow up promising leads, and to explore in some depth the reactions of those concerned.

II A Sociological Model of Subject Choice

The first important concept arising from my discussions with pupils, was that of group perspectives. As used by Becker these refer to 'modes of thought and action developed by a

group which faces the same problematic situation. They are the customary ways members of the group think about such situations and act in them... which appear to group members as the natural and legitimate ones to use in such situations.' (Becker et al, 1961). They arise when people face 'choice points', where previous thought and experience does not guide their actions, though if a particular kind of situation recurs frequently, the perspective will probably become an established part of a person's way of dealing with the world. They develop and gain strength as a result of group interaction and they are situationally specific. I shall show in section IV how, among the pupils, two broad 'group perspectives' seem indicated.

The second key concept, focussing more on pupils' parents discussed in section V is social class. The relationship between social class and educational experience is well known, as is the culture clash between working-class children and teachers. (Eggleston, 1974). My materials suggest that parental definitions of the situation differ along class lines, and thus the parental influences brought to bear on children in making their choices are both quantitatively and qualitatively different in accordance with these broad groupings.

There is a strong connection between social class and the development of group perspectives. Underpinning these are different frames of reference and self-conceptions, which are products of the position a family occupies within the overall

class structure. (Ashton, 1974). Bernstein, for example, has pointed up the differences in socialization between lower working class and the professional and managerial middle class families. (Bernstein, 1972). Among the former, the child is brought up to see the world in terms of the immediate present, and he is taught to acknowledge without questions the bases of his relationships with others.

'The range of alternatives which inhere in the roles is relatively limited, consequently the communication system reduces the degree of individual selection from alternatives. These children are less likely to learn to cope with problems of role ambiguity and ambivalence. They are more likely to avoid or foreclose upon activities or problems which carry this potential.'

(Bernstein, 1972, p.152)

The middle-class child, on the other hand, has a wide range of discretion, and an 'open' communication system. The child learns to make his role, rather than this being formally assigned to him. Judgements and decision-making are a function of the quality of the person rather than the status of the member.

How these frames of reference are stabilized and reinforced by the child's experience of others within the school (thus facilitating the development of group perspectives) is discussed by Ashton. (1974, p.174) For the 'careerless' (mainly products of position-orientated families),

'their (initial) allocation to positions in the lower streams effectively denies them the opportunity to develop their cognitive and manipulative skills beyond a minimum level... On moving through the third and fourth forms these young people face a situation that reinforces their concern with the here and now.'

Pupils in higher streams face the problem of mastering academic subjects as a means of obtaining future academic qualifications, but for these young people there are no such future rewards... The problems they face... are those of obtaining some sort of reward or satisfaction in the here and now - problems that are frequently solved in the classroom through "rulebreaking", and "messing about".'

My study supports this general analysis. However, school decisions such as subject choice are triangular affairs, involving children, parents and teachers. I found the latter important as choice mediators operating within a framework of institutional channelling. These concepts owe a great deal to the work of Cicourel and Kitsuse (1963). As against explanations of academic attitudes and achievements mainly or directly in terms of class-related differentials and peer group culture, Cicourel and Kitsuse, in their study of the American 'Lakeshore High School', presented an alternative view which saw the differentiation of students as a consequence of the administrative organization and decisions of personnel in the school. The counsellor's role in students' ultimate admission to College was shown to be crucial. Assignment to college and non-college courses was dependent upon the interpretations of a student's ability and aptitude by admissions personnel; and since parents knew little about college entrance requirements, his opportunities were, to a great extent, decided by counsellor's perceptions of him. These perceptions of the student were made purely in terms of the characteristics of the student, that is to say that any variations in performance, for instance, would not even be

thought to be attributable to, say, teaching methods.

Furthermore, a counsellor would not base his judgements on test scores alone.

There are other important factors, such as social class, which operates in subtle ways. For example, administrators 'spend more time with the processing of middle- and upper-class students for college entrance, for it is the students from these social classes who have the best means at hand to validate the effectiveness of the high school's programme of developing the talent.' The highly bureaucratic organization of the school helped create the problem, for a) the classification of students 'routinely initiates organization actions that may progressively define and limit the development of such careers', and b) in their concern for professional status, counsellors produced a greater range and frequency of student problems. This reminds one of Becker's 'moral entrepreneur', who originates and leads crusades against particular problems and extends his outrage to other problems as he becomes knowledgeable about them. (Becker, 1963). Dickson emphasizes that organizational structures give rise to moral entrepreneurs, whose function is to instil the organization's ideology and legitimation in the eyes of the public. (Dickson, 1968). All this serves to support Cicourel and Kitsuse's conclusion that 'the advances and setbacks in the process of mobility in such a system are governed less by the folk norms of the larger society than by the doctrines and practices of a professionalized bureaucracy.'

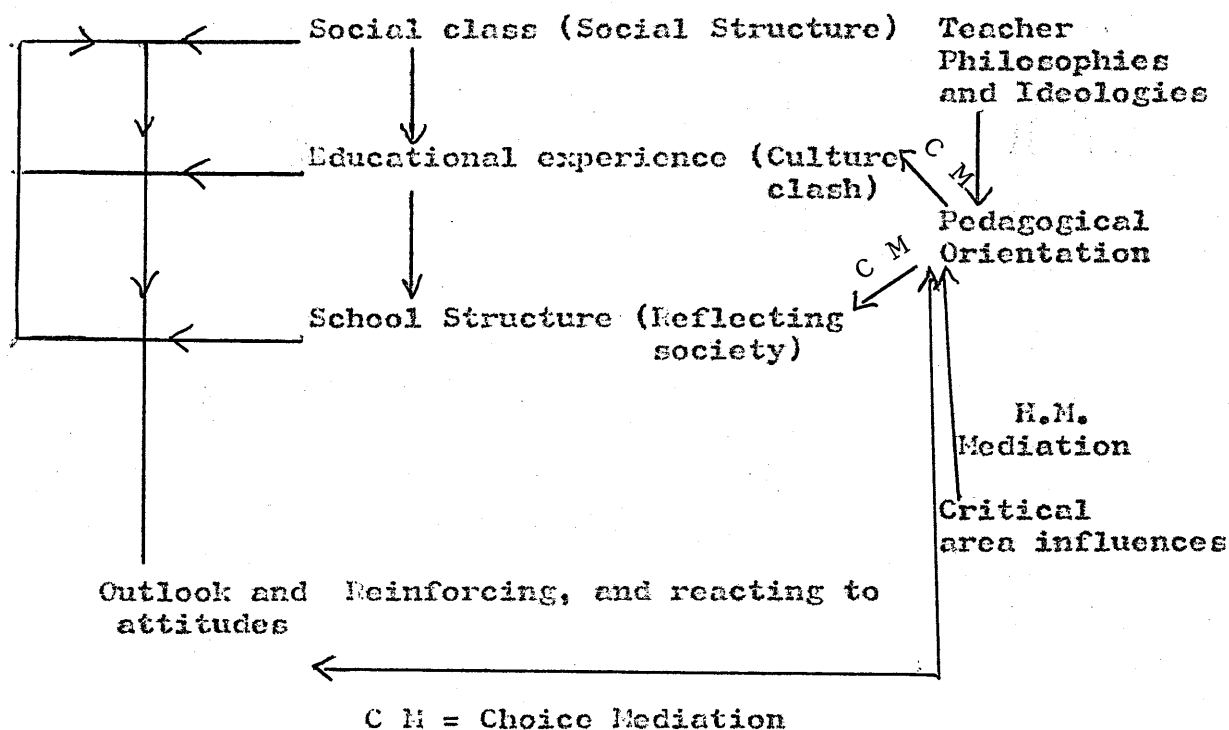
There are many analogies between Cicourel and Kitsuse's study and my own. The school has a similar bifurcation of routes: and institutional processes and teacher counselling (though frequently indirect and subsidiary to their teaching role) play a large part in the distribution of pupils between them. However, there is another important concept which bears on teachers as 'choice mediators' which does not figure in the Cicourel and Kitsuse account. They explain their counsellors' actions in terms of motivation in celebration of the self within the framework of professionalization, and in the self-fulfilling outcomes of bureaucratic structures. This may do as an explanation for the actions of American high school counsellors, but there were other factors bearing on teachers in my account, which I term critical area influences. To a great extent they direct and constrain teacher actions and thus serve to modify the Cicourel and Kitsuse conclusion above, at least in relation to this particular school. I shall expand on this in Section VI.

How I relate these concepts together in a general model is illustrated in Figure 2. Differences in social class origins produce different educational experiences. These are reflected in school structure, which is serving societal rather than individual aims, and hence feeds back into social structure. From all of these, singly and collectively, values, attitudes and actions form.

Group perspectives develop in reaction to 'pedagogical

orientation', which includes aims, methods and organization of teaching, themselves determined by teacher philosophies and ideologies and sustained or intensified by critical area influences (these are frequently mediated by the headmaster). The particular pedagogical orientation dominant in a school then bears on life in the school (culture) and the school's organization (structure). Most educational decisions in school, including subject choice, are made within this framework.

Figure 2 A Social Structural Model of Subject Choice



III The School's System of Subject Choice

During the summer term of the 3rd year, all pupils are required to complete a form expressing their choice of

subjects to study in the 4th and 5th years. (See Figure 3). The rationale behind the scheme is governed by four crucial criteria: (1) Prevailing custom, which allows choice, encouraged by current ideologies such as progressivism and pupil-directed learning. (2) Prevailing state of knowledge and current patterns of educational career, largely dictated by the extended examination system, the requirements of further education and employers, and the disposition of pupils. Thus there are the traditional subjects, and traditional groupings available, (e.g. Sciences, Arts, Commerce, Non-examination subjects); and English, Maths and Games are considered so important as to be compulsory; (3) Type of child. All the pupils at this school had been unsuccessful at the eleven plus examination and for the greater majority it was considered that more than six examination subjects might well prove counter-productive, and in any case were quite sufficient for all purposes. Hence the four 'choice' groups, in addition to the Compulsory Maths and English; (4) Resources (size of school, number of teachers, space and equipment).

Figure 3

Appendix 1

FOURTH YEAR OPTIONS: September, 1974

Before entering the 4th Form you are given an opportunity to select the subjects which you would like to study for the next two years. English and Mathematics are compulsory, but, within certain limits, you may choose the remaining four subjects of your course.

Choose ONE subject from EACH of the following groups.

Put a tick in the box below the subject you have chosen.

- 1. Mathematics
- 2. English

3.	Commerce	Chemistry	Geography	Art	Environmental Studies (non-examination)		
4.	Commerce	Physics	English Literature	General Science	General Science (non-examination)		
5.	Commerce	Biology	History	Tech. Drawing	Social Studies (non-examination)		
6.	Woodwork	Metal- work	Needle- craft	House- craft	Music	French	Art & Craft (non-exam)

Further information

- a) Your programme will include 4 periods of Games and Physical Education.
- b) Pupils not entered for examinations in Woodwork, Metalwork, Needlecraft, Housecraft, French or Music will be able to participate in the School's Community Service programme. A limited number will be able to spend further time in the practical areas of their choice.

IV The Pupils: The Development of Group Perspectives

Within this framework the pupils chose. Each pupil was asked to state, in an informal interview situation, his or her reasons for each of the original choices. Table 1 summarizes the results. The three forms were streamed by ability. In the first two years pupils had been unstreamed, but setted for English and Mathematics.

There appear to be two main factors, an affective one (liking or disliking), and a utilitarian one (career and ability), and they seem to hold in roughly equal proportions overall. However, there are some interesting differences within, illustrative of two basic group perspectives. The positive reasons (liking and good ability) are much stronger in 3a and 3b than in 3c, where good ability is hardly a factor at all. 'Liking for subject' includes, of course, a strong teacher element. The like/dislike teacher categories are for responses indicating direct personal reasons - 'I can't stand the teacher', 'She picks on me all the time, I'd never get through the course', 'He's the only teacher I seem to get on with', 'She hates me so she won't teach me nothing. If she don't like yer, she won't learn yer'. This was a factor in only 7% of cases, with nearly three times as many girls being involved as boys. The like/dislike of subject response focusses on the subject as mediated by the teacher. But this response begs a further question - why do they 'like' certain subjects? The interviews showed these reasons to fall into two types which point up the contrast between 3a and 3c more vividly. Thus the former tended to like subjects for official, supportive, traditional educational reasons,

Table 1: Pupils' Reasons for Choices

Forms	Nos.	Liking for Subject	Dislike of Others	Job	Good Ability	Poor Ability at Others	Liking for Teachers	Dislike of Teachers	Others
3a Boys	15	29	5	15	19	1	1	2	8
Girls	21	29	26	44	12	5	5	11	2
Total	36	58	31	59	31	6	6	13	10
3b Boys	14	18	9	12	23	6	1	3	10
Girls	20	31	17	13	8	5	3	1	5
Total	34	49	26	25	31	11	4	4	15
3c Boys	15	13	6	10	3	13	0	1	2
Girls	15	9	22	8	0	3	0	1	2
Total	30	22	28	18	3	16	0	2	4
All Boys	44	60	20	37	45	20	2	6	20
All Girls	56	69	65	65	20	13	8	13	9
Total	100	129	85	102	65	33	10	19	29

the latter for unofficial, anti-school, counter-cultural social reasons. Thus the first type might like a subject because the teacher makes it interesting, is well organized, can keep order, and gives them to feel that they are learning something; the second type for almost directly opposite reasons, such as having few demands made on them, having great freedom, and even 'having a muck-about'. As this is an important illustration of these vastly different attitudes towards school, I give some examples of each type.

Type 1: Liking/Disliking subjects and/or teachers for
'supportive' reasons

Sandra : I like History and I like Mrs. Nelson and she makes History really interesting, and I don't think I could do it if she didn't, an' she does - very interesting.

P.Woods : So if any other teacher took you for History you'd have second thoughts?

Sandra : Yes!

Leslie : Mrs. Nelson, we all get on very well with her, don't we, I mean I don't think I'd take it, if Mr. Hanly was doing it.... Mrs. Nelson, she really does get down to it, she makes the lesson clear. If you don't understand, she'll go over it again.

Julie : An' she really can keep control of the class can't she? Without having to raise the voice - an' she's ever so quiet - an' everyone's quiet 'int they?

P.Woods : What do you reckon the secret is then of winning everyone's respect?

Leslie : Maybe it's personality coming out of Mrs. Nelson. She just has to stand there and the room fills with her personality.

P.Woods : What happens if somebody messes about - you've got some pretty rough characters in your form?

Leslie : You've said it, but they don't, not with her, because of her personality and her way of doing things, even the rogues are interested.

Sandra : When she's done she gives us homework and everybody does it, don't they?

One can also dislike subjects for 'supportive' reasons (i.e. using official criteria). I asked one girl why she chose Needlecraft on line 4. (See Figure 3).

Susan : Well, I can't take Woodwork or Metalwork. French - I don't get on with French very well and I can't do it, and I can't take Art/Craft (because she's doing that on line 1). I was considering taking Music, but I thought it's only the basics I need and I thought I'm not too keen on Mr. Greig's way of doing things so I think 2 years of that would drive me round the bend. And Housecraft - I forgot my kit at that time, so it wasn't worth my doing that, so Needlecraft was the only one left.

P.Woods : Don't you need materials for that?

Susan : Yes, but not so often. Cookery you need stuff

every week and it costs, and Mums get fed up with it.

Type 2: Liking/Disliking Subjects and/or teachers for counter-official reasons

I would include in this those who chose subjects for transient 'right' reasons. Thus, a recent event, rather than studied and closely considered opinion, might be fastened upon in an otherwise lost situation. Why had one boy chosen Biology at first:-

'I dunno. Well, we done some'at about the body, I thought that were good... you know, animals an' that.'

Many ruled some subjects out because they were too hard work.

Yvonne : I hate Geography.

P.Woods: Why?

Yvonne : Do hard work. These map things. He gives you maps and you have to write names on.

In this regard, 'writing' was by far the most onerous activity. Several pupils had been cooled out of subjects by the sheer fatigue of the writing they were required to do. They would be equally impressed though in the opposite direction with subjects where the demands were few.

'Because you have an easy time and I like it.'

'I like it because 'e's great. You never do no work, we 'ave a great time. Good laugh that is.'

'I like it because I'm with all me mates and we 'ave a right old laugh. Not like some subjects where we do nothing but work. Gives yer a 'eadache all day that does.'

To return to Table 1, 3a also seem more swayed by thoughts of career, but this is a somewhat misleading result since this is due mainly to the girls opting for the Commerce course. There are some interesting differences between boys' and girls' responses. Boys appear to take ability and lack of it more into account than girls, while girls are more influenced than boys by likes and dislikes. One might speculate that this is a consequence of sexual socialization, boys as ultimate careerists and breadwinners not allowing themselves to be swayed by likes and dislikes to the same extent as the girls.

Another striking result, again indicative of group perspectives was the difference in number of responses among forms. The average number of responses per pupil decreases with stream with a big drop in 3c. I take this, as with their reasons for likes and dislikes, to be a reflection of their basic attitudes to school. For 3c, it is largely characterized by estrangement from its main objectives. As one of the teachers said to me, 'You won't find many of their parents (i.e. of 3c pupils) here tonight (at the headmaster's talk), they know it's not for them.' Such pupils alienated from the school's processes, go through the organizational motions that are required of them, inventing their own

rationale for existence. It is hardly surprising then that when faced with making a decision of their own relating to the school's processes, many were sunk. It was an unreal situation for them.

Example 1

Dave : I filled that form in in about 20 seconds
(laughs).

P.Woods : Did you ask anybody's advice about what to do?

Dave : I didn't 'ave time. See, I filled my paper in, I took it 'ome, see what me dad think, an' I forgot all about it, an' then, oh (deputy head) came in and gi' me another form an' I filled it in quick so I wouldn't lose it, because I've got a bad memory, I always forget things an' I just filled it in quick.

P.Woods :: Did you talk about it amongst yourselves?

Dave and
Philip : No.

Kevin : We just said what we were doing.

Example 2

P.Woods : What subjects did you choose?

Paul : The non-exam ones.

P.Woods : Why did you choose those?

Paul : Because I ain't no good at anything so I chose those.

Examples 3 and 4

Malcolm, though with three of his friends, seemed to know very little about the process, what was required of him, as well as how he met it. Though he had chosen four subjects, he was unable to say why he had chosen them. Sheila did the same as her sister because she was 'no good at anything'. In fact, her sister filled in the form for her, and she was unable to remember the subjects she had chosen, even when shown the list.

Example 5

Gary : I only done two out of those, I didn't fill the other two places in.

P.Woods : Why is that?

Gary : All the others I'm not any good at.

Example 6

P.Woods : What subjects have you chosen, Susan?

Susan : I dunno. I forget. (I show her the form)
I think it was (4 subjects).

P.Woods : Why did you choose those?

Susan : I dunno.

P.Woods : Did you ask anybody's advice?

Susan : Yeah, I asked Mr. Lewis's. First of all, I put all sciences down because I want to be a nurse... and he said they're no good.

P.Woods : Why did he say that?

Susan : I dunno.

Example 7

Claire : I'm doing the non-exam course.

P.Woods : Why?

Claire : Because I don't like any of the other courses.

P.Woods : Why do General Science non-exam rather than
General Science exam?

Claire : Because that's an exam course 'int it?

P.Woods : Why do you know you won't like it?

Claire : I don't like Science anyway.

P.Woods : Why put down for it then?

Claire : Well, I 'ad to pick something, din't I?

These suggest the nature of the non-event it was for many pupils. In Example 1, Dave turns the procedure into material for his own use, as he does for many other events relating to school. He makes a laugh of it. Examples 2, 3 and 4 illustrate the problems set up by pupils' lack of success by the school's single criterion of ability. If you are not any good at anything, there are no grounds for making a choice, and you gravitate towards the non-examination subjects. Nobody selects those subjects for positive reasons. Examples 3, 4 and 6 perhaps give some idea of the massive vagueness or unawareness that some of these pupils displayed. Several of them were hardly conscious of anything having happened at all. Example 7 shows the unerring logic of a pupil with a sound grasp of the situation.

For these pupils then, there is not much 'choice', inasmuch as they 'choose' at all, it is a diffident, social

counter-cultural choice. In making their choices, they employ the following kind of dichotomous model:-

Kinds of Subjects

1. Hard work	Easy
2. Examination	Non-examination
3. Nasty, horrible	Fun
4. Boring	Interesting
5. Without friends	With friends
6. Control	Freedom

There is a sense of immediate gratification, and jocular acceptance of ultimate destiny. Years of interactions, tests and examinations have taught them their place. By the time of the 3rd year, these processes have completed the sifting, and groups have worked out their *modi vivendi*. They may choose only within their pre-ordained route, and for some in 3c, as we have seen, that means no choice at all. For another group of pupils, mostly found in 3a, subject choice, like all other school decisions, is a real and positive affair, and is defined in school terms. For them, society is a contest system and they are in the contest with a chance. Comparative success in assessment and selection mechanisms reinforced by social factors (like within-group pressure and parental encouragement, discussed shortly) will have cued them in to this. This means they do see the future in progressively structured terms, and they do believe their choices have relevance to their future careers. Thus they are much more likely to think in terms of career, ability, examination success, and other factors that promote it.

Here is an example of the sort of reasoning involved:-

Stephen : I chose Chemistry instead of Geography because someone advised me it would be better for the RAF than Geography. I thought Geography would be better, but the bloke next door thought Chemistry. He knows a bloke in the Air Force, pretty important, and he was talking to Mum and Dad one night and he said Chemistry was more important. I would much rather do Chemistry myself than Geography because you can't do Geography 'O' level, but you can Chemistry.

P.Woods : Why Physics?

Stephen : Well, the only other one I thought of was English Literature and I'm not really interested in that, so I chose Physics.

P.Woods : The others are out are they?

Stephen : Yeah - General Science - I'm already doing Chemistry. I'm not interested in Biology, so I might as well do Physics and specialize in something else rather than do General Science.

P.Woods : Tell me about Technical Drawing.

Stephen : Well, I wanted to do both that and History, I just couldn't make my mind up.

P.Woods : What was hard about it?

Stephen : Well, if I join the RAF, I want to be a draughtsman, so Technical Drawing is obviously the one to do. But I'm interested in History and I enjoy it. I put History down first then thought again and changed it later.

P.Woods : Did you talk to anybody about it?

Stephen : No. I told Mum and Dad I was thinking of changing it, and they said, 'We won't say yes or no, either way.'

P.Woods : And why Woodwork in Group 6?

Stephen : Well, I'm not good at Metalwork, I don't do Needlework or Housecraft, I'm no good at Music, shan't mention French. I quite enjoy Woodwork, but, I'm not much good at it.

Contrast this with the replies given earlier. The close commitment to school values, the logical and ebullient application to the task in hand, the instrumental reasoning tinged with the educational reciprocation all point to this pupil's close approximation to the 'ideal', and emphasizes the distance the others are away from it. His major criteria in choosing are:

Job-related	Non-related
Good ability	Poor ability
Good learning situation	Poor learning situation

The existence of the polar sub-culture in the school is well documented. Hargreaves showed in his study of 'Lumley Secondary Modern' that the higher the stream a pupil was in, the more likely he was to conform with pro-academic culture and behaviour, while lower streams were disposed toward contrary norms. (Hargreaves, 1967). Lacey also claimed that pupils' internalization of self-identities was in accordance with their place in the school's structure. (Lacey, 1970).

While King found evidence to suggest a direct link between the values highly approved by the teachers and values of 'undeniably middle class connotations' on work, interests, activities and opinions of children. (King, 1969). My study again illustrates the connection with school structure, but further shows the existence and illustrates the different perspectives of these two broad groups of pupils confronted with the specific problem of subject choice. They employ different interpretative models, distinguished by instrumentalism on the one hand, and social and counter-institutional factors on the other. These underwrite the more general and potentially misleading affective factor of 'liking' and 'disliking', which applies to some degree to both groups. The values and attitudes which provide the bases of these group perspectives derive in large part, I suggest, from position in the social class structure. Differences among parental perspectives along class lines are examined in the next section.

V Parents: Some Differences emerging from Social Class

In an attempt to gain a more 'holistic' picture of the subject choice process, an exploratory study was made among parents, necessarily on more traditional lines.

Conversations were held with six pairs of parents on subject choice, and on the basis of these a questionnaire was devised and sent to all parents of all 3rd year children in the middle of the summer term when pupils were resolving their choices. (See Appendix II).

Replies were received from 73% of homes and 56% of parents, as in Table 2a.

Table 2a Parents' questionnaire response rate

	3a		3b		3c		Total
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Fathers (Alone)	5	1	1	3	3	0	13
Mothers (Alone)	1	8	3	5	3	6	26
Both Parents	4	6	8	9	7	5	39
Pupils Represented	10	15	12	17	13	11	78
Nos. in Form	14	20	17	21	20	15	107

There were over twice as many mothers replying alone for daughters than there were fathers replying alone for sons. This mildly suggests the possibility of girls having more influence directed at them in the form of their mothers than boys.

25% of homes of all 3rd year children were visited by me before the end of the summer term at the invitation of parents. Visits were made as questionnaires were returned. Table 2b gives the details.

Table 2b Parents Interviewed

	3i		3ii		3iii		All		Totals
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Fathers (Alone)	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	3	9
Mothers (Alone)	0	3	1	2	2	1	3	6	4
Both	3	3	4	3	1	0	8	6	14
Totals	3	7	6	7	3	1	12	15	27

Parental Advice

The responses were analysed by form. Unfortunately, insufficient precise detail of father's occupation was available for it to be of use. However, the connection between social class and stream is so well known for us to assume reasonably that it holds in this case, an assumption well supported by the interviews. (See p. 119)

The questionnaire replies supported the social structure model in some respects, in that 3c parents in making certain different responses from 3a showed that they do hold different, less supportive attitudes towards school, and their replies give some indication of what this might mean in terms of influence. Table 2c summarizes the replies on projected 'advice to children'.

Table 2c Parents' projected advice to children

	Very important 3a 3b 3c	Quite important 3a 3b 3c	Of some importance 3a 3b 3c	Not very important 3a 3b 3c	Not at all important 3a 3b 3c
Ability	23 21 22	8 24 8	2 3 0	0 0 1	0 0 0
Interest	19 20 27	12 16 7	2 1 0	0 0 0	0 0 0
Best Teachers	8 9 15	8 7 8	12 20 8	3 9 0	2 1 1
Own Choice	15 19 27	11 20 3	7 5 3	0 1 0	0 0 0
Good Job	20 25 26	7 13 4	6 7 3	0 1 0	0 0 0
Teacher Advice	12 13 9	18 17 10	2 13 8	1 1 2	0 0 3

Fewer thought 'teacher advice' as important as some of the others, but 3c parents thought it even less so than others. 3c parents would be more inclined than others to say, 'Do those subjects you want to' and they also put more emphasis on doing subjects with the best teachers, and (compared with 3a) 'interest'. These results are consistent with a model implying a differential fit between outlook of parents of different class, and aims and ethos of school. The 'own choice' and 'teacher advice' differences in particular suggest less involvement and perhaps suspicion of teachers among 3c parents. More of these proportionately also put more emphasis on 'interest'. Interviews showed that 3a parents were inclined to be more involved, and to use more complex reasoning. Thus, they would be less likely to settle first for interest, best teachers, or own choice and would more closely accord with the school's declared policy of 'guided choice', reasoning their way through a complex set of factors; while the replies of parents in the lower form accord with the 'drop-out' syndrome shown by many of their children. This squares with replies to Question 1 which asked if their children consulted them about what subjects to choose. Table 2d shows there are signs of less consultation in 3c than in 3a.

Table 2d Parental Consultation: Parents' Views

	3a	3b	3c	Totals
Yes	26	33	21	80
No	7	13	15	35
Totals	33	46	36	115

Attendance at the two parents' meetings held to discuss subject choice also reflects this relationship.

Table 2e Parents' attendance at either school meeting

	3a	3b	3c
Yes	29	31	12
No	4	15	23

It is also supported by pupils' own responses on parental advice. They were asked in interview, whether they had discussed the matter with anyone. With regard to parents there appeared to be two types of discussion, brief and detailed. A higher proportion of 3a pupils claimed to have had detailed discussions with parents than other pupils, while those in 3c had the smallest proportion of any kind of discussion.

Table 2f Parental Consultation: Pupils' Views

	Brief	Detailed	None
3a Boys	5	6	3
Girls	8	12	0
Total	13	18	3
3b Boys	11	4	2
Girls	12	6	3
Total	23	10	5
3c Boys	5	4	11
Girls	6	4	5
Total	11	8	16
Grand Total	47	36	24

Stronger attachment to unofficial functions of the school by 3c parents is also suggested by the replies on school aims. A much larger proportion of 3c parents attached great importance to 'keeping children occupied till they go out to work', than did other parents.

On influences bearing on their views of their child's suitability for certain groups of subjects (see Table 2g) fewer 3c parents reckon they are influenced by school reports, examination results or teachers' recommendations (i.e. a 'school' factor). With others, most of them claim to be strongly influenced by a 'personal' factor (own knowledge of the child, knowledge of the rest of the family). This again squares with the social, uncommitted outlook of their children and a distancing from official policy and processes.

Table 2g Perceived influences on parents

	Very influential			Quite influential			A little			Not very influential		
	3a	3b	3c	3a	3b	3c	3a	3b	3c	3a	3b	3c
Reports	10	12	3	17	22	19	4	8	9	2	0	5
Examinations	11	12	2	15	22	15	4	6	13	3	0	2
Own knowledge	25	23	23	7	14	11	0	3	1	1	1	0
Family knowledge	10	9	18	8	11	9	3	7	3	9	13	5
Teachers	11	13	5	19	22	13	2	5	7	1	1	8
Child's view	12	17	7	16	20	23	4	4	2	1	2	3
Other children	0	2	4	2	12	9	6	10	10	17	17	10

Such a position does not necessarily involve criticism of school processes. Being alienated from them, criticism does not arise, evaluation is not an issue. This may explain the large majority of favourable answers received to those questions about how they viewed the school's programme (Questions 5, 6 and 7). 84% of all respondents thought the school offered a reasonable choice of subjects, though only 68% thought the school gave enough information and advice, and 70% thought the school did as much as it reasonably could to see pupils get the subjects which they choose.

Parental Influences

Some of these reactions are no doubt compounded by the actual school performance of their children, but the view that the basic perspectives are independent of the school and achievement, was supported by the interviews. Pitt considered that 'the influence of the parents appears to be neutral'. (Pitt, 1973). Reid, however, while finding a large number of pupils who make their choices unaided, found that 44% of mothers and 41% of fathers had discussed the choice of options with their children in some depth; and that a higher proportion of pupils from non-manual select parental influence as the most important, as compared with manual. (Reid et al., 1974). My results square with Reid's; and both support the social structure model. From my interviews with pupils and parents, I identified five types of parental influence: 1) Compulsion, 2) Strong guidance, 3) Mutual resolution, 4) Reassurance and 5) Little or nil. Table 3 shows how these were spread among the

27 homes that I visited. Though numbers are small, the trend towards stronger counselling for the middle-class child is clearly visible, confirming 3rd year pupils' own accounts, as given in Table 2f, p.116. Further, as I illustrate below, where working-class parents give strong guidance, it tends to be less well informed about school processes and subjects and their linkage with future careers.

Table 3 Distribution of Types of Parental Influence

Type of influence	Middle-class			Total	Working-class			Total
	3a	3b	3c		3a	3b	3c	
Compulsion	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
Strong guidance	1	3	0	4	1	0	1	2
Mutual resolution	2	1	0	3	1	4	1	6
Reassurance	3	0	0	3	0	1	2	3
Little/Nil	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
Total	6	6	0	12	2	6	6	14

Some examples might illuminate the quality of these various types of guidance.

1) Compulsion

This seems to have been used in cases where parents greatly feared their child was in danger of selecting the 'wrong' route with all its disadvantageous consequences. I only found middle-class parents using it, and it is another instance of how the middle-class child, who for whatever reason might have adopted the social, counter-cultural model, can be cushioned against a possible fall into the drop-out zone.

'My boy was in the L form - an absolute waste of time - feeding the hens and pruning the bushes in their final year. He got very bored. I wouldn't like to see that happen to her.'

'There is a fringe element left out in the cold and we have feared Andrea might be in there but for the grace of God.'

Here are two examples of pupils being rescued from this fate, one in the pupil's words, the other the parents':

- Linda : I didn't want to do Commerce
- P.Woods : Why have you chosen it then?
- Linda : Because my mother said so.
- P.Woods : Why did she say that?
- Linda : Because she wants me to work in an office.
- P.Woods : And what do you want to do?
- Linda : Be a hairdresser.
- P.Woods : If it were left to you what to do, what would you have chosen?
- Linda : I haven't thought about it.
- P.Woods : Will you be allowed to do Commerce, do you think?
- Linda : I hope I'm knocked out.
- P.Woods : What form will you go in?
- Linda : I'd go in 4L straight away.

Linda is employing the diffident, social model of subject choice, and her mother is kicking against it. Here is a

directive father explaining how he went about it:-

'I suggested Commerce at first - you can get a nice little office job, meet good people and so on - otherwise you might be stuck behind a bench. But when I saw that Commerce was all they did - and talking to other people, a general course leading to a broader education seemed more suitable. Oh, there's a lot of conniving gone into it. I've been up to the school and seen the teachers. Teaching is equally socially acceptable, but it might be something else in two year's time, so a broad base is necessary. Sandra was stuck in Group 3 - all horrible she said - so we eliminated the worst, then I came to Geography. He's a good teacher, and by looking at her book, it's nice and orderly, and he's got through some stuff - and by talking to him on the night, I decided that was the best one to do.' (Managing Director).

Again, the choice was nonon-event to this girl. She told me she would have preferred to carry on in the same way, rather than be faced with these choices. Her father, a Managing Director, made up for her lack of resolution.

2) Strong Guidance

This is similar to the above, except that it contains an element of persuasion:-

'He told us which ones he wanted to take and then we got at him. We went to Open Night, saw his teachers and then we saw him again and changed his mind on one. He was talking about the Royal Navy. We said, "Woodwork's no good for that." Mrs. Foster said he could do French if he put his mind to it. We persuaded him to do it. We tried to talk to him along the lines of "do those subjects likely to lead to a good job." The problem is he doesn't know what he wants to do, and it's difficult to know what to choose as a consequence.' (Police Officer)

Sometimes the influence is subtly concealed, at least in the parents' eyes. This extract suggests the continual involvement typical of the middle-class parent:-

'It goes back over a period of time. There's been a careful channelling of opportunities as they've presented themselves. From experience of life, I'm biased towards a child going into secretarial work, because if you're not academic, the only alternative is factory work. It goes back two or three years really. I would say if you don't get good results you'll land up in a factory on the line, and you've seen them factory girls in their hair nets. Sara actually made her own choice - I think I influenced her unknowingly. She told me she wanted to be a secretary, and that's what I've wanted her to do! None of the subjects on the

bottom line would be helpful to her in the sort of occupation I wanted for her, so I chose Housecraft for her, for general use, later.'
(Factory Manager).

3) Mutual resolution

Mutual resolution, with reassurance, was the most common form among those I interviewed. Working-class families were well represented here. However, though they might show as much concern as middle-class families, their guidance tended to be less well informed. Middle-class parents told me in detail how they monitored their children's thinking on the matter, making sure that they themselves were well informed, by, for example, frequent consultations with teachers; then employing this knowledge, and that of the child, and of the world in general to feed gently into the decision-making process when requested. By contrast, working-class parents seemed as puzzled as their children. To many of these, school is an alien though desirable agency, where professionals practise their considerable expertise behind well-defined boundaries. They have little idea either of their own child's achievements and capabilities or of the career prospects and how they are associated with educational routes.

Another 'disadvantage' for working-class parents was that they tended to be less instrumentally orientated than middle-class, though every parent I met thought primarily of the child's future career.

The following examples illustrate these differences:-

'Over the past year we've known subject choice was coming up. She wanted guidance in those subjects she was reasonably good at. We went to the school and had a long talk with Mrs. Nelson in early May. Ann said she wanted a Commerce Course. She would be opting out of a lot of other things, and with her grasshopper mind, we thought it too much to ram down her throat and she'd become bored and disinterested. She's very good with children so I said, "What about child nurse?" and I said, "It's not the end of the world if you want to change." She said, "Yes, that's what I want to do." We then had to decide which subjects were most suitable for that.' (Managing Director)

And here is Ann's account:-

'I talked to Mum about it a lot and we've been through it. It would often crop up over dinner and we'd talk about it... She often said to me I had to have a lot of advice in everything... I wanted something to help me with my child nurse... and Housecraft, that was essential really; Cooking; and General Science - you have to have something to do with Science. And I like History, and I like Mrs. Nelson. Mum likes Geography, and I like it anyway, and that was the only one in that group I wanted to do.'

One captures the sense that school, and what goes on there, is part of the way of life of this family. They recognized the implications of the decision and laid down the foundations accordingly.

Compare this account:-

'He asked me what would be the best if he was going in for diving. I said, "Well, you'll have to meet people; English is always good." He sat a long time in front of the list. I didn't want to tell him what to put, but he said, "What do you think?" (Farm Labourer's wife)

This shows another pupil, equally lost as to what to choose, ultimately receiving strong guidance, though it is not nearly so well informed.

4) Reassurance

Here, typically, the pupil would make the choice, then show parents, often asking if it seemed reasonable to them.

'She chose, then asked our advice. She knows what she wants to do. She was seeking reassurance mainly. I leave the choice up to her really, she's quite sensible. I'll support her judgement. If she sets her mind to something, she can do it.'

'Kathryn did ask our advice, but she also had her own set ideas on the subject she wanted

to do, as she has firmly made her own mind up to go into the medical profession of some kind, depending on exam results.' (School Secretary, Wife of Works Manager)

Many parents approached in this manner gave general advice such as 'do those you're best at' or 'do those you want to'. There was again a suggestion of class difference in type of reassurance offered, middle-class parents supporting their children through confidence in them to make the best choices, working-class parents supporting their children as they would in any enterprise as part of the socio-emotional bond between them.

5) Very little or nil

Very little or nil, or disregarded, or not consulted. Many of those who simply advise 'do what you want to' might more properly belong in this category. But at least they were asked and gave some advice. Several pupils claimed they never showed the form to their parents.

'Mum wanted me to do Commerce, because you can get a good job, and that. But I didn't want to do it because it's too boring. I didn't ask my Dad at all. I don't think Mum knows the subjects I've chosen.'

'I didn't have time to ask my parents. See, I filled my paper in, I took it home, see what my Dad think, and I forgot all about it.'

'I showed the form to Mum and she said, "It's up to you, I don't know your ability at school."'

As Table 3 shows, I only found working-class parents giving very little or no advice.

It seems fairly clear, in this school at least, that regarding parents' influence over their children's choice of subjects, the higher the social class, the more considerable, both quantitatively and qualitatively, it is likely to be.

Parental Types

Parents influence the choice in other ways - through teachers, for example. All the parents I saw were, not surprisingly, anxious for their child to 'do the right thing'. But as already said, parents do not have equal resources to bring to bear on the situation, and again, these differences tend to follow class divisions. There are, as far as school and its knowledge, pedagogy and selection processes are concerned, a number of uninformed parents.

'The teachers should tell them what to do, or at least go further than the parents. We didn't know what to say - we ummed and aahd - then went to the school and the teacher says, "Why don't you do Tech. Drawing?" He's ever so good at that, so we came back, but of course if you say, "Do this", he'll rebel. You just don't know

their ability, so I said, "Do ~~them~~ you think you're good at and some of those you think you're not so good at, because as you get older your views change and you see things differently."

(Electrician)

Several parents were clearly in desperate need of help, accepting responsibility for advising their child and anxious to do so, but reluctant and unconfident in an area with so many unknown variables. Ultimately it seems advice of a general nature would be given, as above, or the child would be left to make his/her own choice. Some 'uninformed' parents on the other hand were less anxious. The situation impinging on them in less of a traumatic way. Similar general advice would be given, but there would be very little knowledge of particular subjects and how to distinguish between them in relating to the future. Some would be reduced simply to saying, 'It's up to you'. Other parents differed in their confidence though not all had equal knowledge of the school. Some were very supportive of the school, its staff and its functions and hence, by implication, sure that the best would be done for their child.

'They've got every facility there. A child only needs a bit of initiative; the school certainly gives them every opportunity.'

(Secretary)

'It works on the principle of first come, first served. You know your first options are honoured as long as your exam results are O.K. Without a doubt you've got to give them with brains first choice really.'

'You can't complain about the school now, it's a lovely place. If they don't make the best of it - it's up to them. They're there five years, it's for their own good, I mean. You know times are not going to get easier, they'll get harder.'

(Petrol Pump Attendant)

There were a number of critical and coercive parents. These tend to come from the middle classes. They have a low opinion of the school and are distinguished by the extent to which they will put themselves out to achieve their ends. This may take the form of aggressive postures at meetings, and frequent visits and 'phone calls to the school. I have no evidence of their effect, but one social trick that worked was brought to my notice:--

'Alan pranged an exam. He only got 12% and was very depressed, quite sure the teacher wouldn't let him take it because that teacher always goes on the exam and not term work. So I advised him to go to the teacher and apologise, and promise to try hard in the future.'

(Estate Agent's wife)

We cannot know for sure, of course, what effect this boy's methods as coached by his mother had on teachers, but at least some of his contemporaries were in no doubt.

John : Alan Snowling has been accepted for Chemistry - and he only got 20%. Gary got 40% and he can't do it.

David : Neil got 27% and he can't do it.

Mike : Yeah, well, Alan Snowling got only 12% for it - and he was accepted; and Mr. Garrett had second thoughts about Neil with 27%.

P.Woods : Why do you think Alan Snowling was accepted?

John : Well, he went up to him and pleaded. Said he was sorry and all that and how he could do it if he worked hard, so (the teacher) said, 'If you work hard, I'll help you.'

P.Woods : Why don't you do that?

John : I'm unlucky in things like that.

This is not a stray idiosyncratic example. It suggests again the social advantages enjoyed by some children.

Parental Characteristics

I was impressed during the interviews with certain characteristics of parents which have repercussions for their views on subject choice, as indeed on all school processes.

1. Particularism

All parents, naturally, showed to some degree or other

particularistic concern for their own child as opposed to the totality of the pupil body. Many acknowledged this, of course, and their fears centred on whether the teacher's concern for the latter would work to their own child's disadvantage. One parent ruefully reported the headmaster as stating, 'It's for the benefit of the pupils at large, full stop.' "And we were told ours was not to reason why, we're lucky to get what we get."

There is bound to be tension between these particularistic and general concerns. Indeed it is one of the chief sources of role conflict in headteachers. (Cohen, 1969).

Particularism is rarely unprejudiced. It leads some into criticism of the subject choice arrangements on two main grounds, (a) that it is too severe a restriction on the number of subjects one can take, and (b) pupils are debarred from choosing more than one subject in a group. Here is one parent following through the implications both for her own particular child, and for the school:-

'If a child has decided the subjects she needs for her job on leaving school, she may find she is unable to take all subjects required if they come in the same group. Therefore, she may have to take one or two subjects she has no interest in whatsoever, and have no bearing on her career in mind. This tends to lead to the child being thoroughly bored, wasting time, and feeling discouraged. Then they start messing about.'

(Housewife)

The administrative reasons underlying the structure are, of course, unacceptable answers to this particularism. It seems to be fanned by teacher criticism of a parent's child on parents' evenings. Different interpretive structures are being brought to bear, teachers being much more likely to use an ideal-typical framework. I shall expand on this in Chapter 9.

2. Instrumentality

Every parent I met thought primarily of the child's future career, though working-class parents were less instrumentally orientated. As far as the school programme is concerned, all the 'trimmings' such as Community Service (unless, of course, it served the purpose of career in some way), come under attack. It is connected with:-

3. Status consciousness

Many parents, particularly middle-class 'critical' and 'coercive' ones, were very sensitive to the difference between the two main routes.

'The headmaster said his usual piece about it not being very shameful to be non-examination, but this is all whitewash. Everybody knows it's a waste of time in the non-examination group.'

(Insurance Broker)

The school might dress the activities of this group in widely accepted educational theory, but in parents' eyes the

product is ill-defined, there are no visible rewards and it is extra-mainstream. One parent described their curriculum as consisting of 'hobby jobs' (social crafts, car maintenance, gardening, painting) and 'lazy subjects' (Art, Pottery).

4. Traditional pedagogy

Parents invariably strongly supported traditional forms of pedagogy, of which they had had most experience themselves, of course. Thus, support was common for things like firm control, neatness, 'good' behaviour, respect for authority, a clearly identifiable and tangible body of work, forceful teaching and good results. As a body, the parents seemed much more entrenched in this paradigm than the teachers. Comments focussed on the general running of the school, discipline, and teacher-pupil relations.

'We teach our children good manners and that, and then it's all undone outside. You should hear some of the language, and then they come home and tell us what they did to teachers - we did this and we did that - honestly!'

(Housewife)

'They need more discipline because I hear if they don't want to do anything they don't do it. They should be made to do it because if they did only what they wanted and not what was needed they wouldn't get anywhere. The school's all right for those who are clever,

but they don't do enough for those who need an extra shove. Linda needed pushing - me and her had great battles. It's been a struggle, but she's grateful now. Oh! it's so exhausting, constantly nagging and adolescence is such a rotten time, ever so moody, falling in love every five minutes.'

(School Clerk)

These characteristics add a further dimension to the study of parental influence. The utilitarian aims of the school which underwrite processes like subject choice clearly have strong support among the parent body. But there is a dialectic relationship between school and parents. Many in fact believe that the wishes of parents have a deterministic effect on school aims and policies. More will be said about this later.

In this section I have shown that there are different kinds and amounts of parental advice and influence operating on the different groups of pupils identified previously. These tentatively suggest a connection with social class. Middle-class parents are more likely to be more involved with school processes, show more complex reasoning in accordance with school criteria in advising their children, be more persuaded by 'school' factors; working-class parents display less 'involvement', are less instrumentally orientated, possibly entertain suspicions of school and teachers, have less consultation with teachers and their own

children, are more likely to be persuaded by 'personal' factors. Middle-class parents tend to give strong guidance, be well informed, critical and coercive, instrumentally orientated and status conscious. Working-class parents tend to give less guidance and to be uninformed. Indications have been given of the subtle ways in which class can work towards differential opportunity, for example, through 'knowledge of the world' and 'how to handle men'. It also operated, of course, through the teachers.

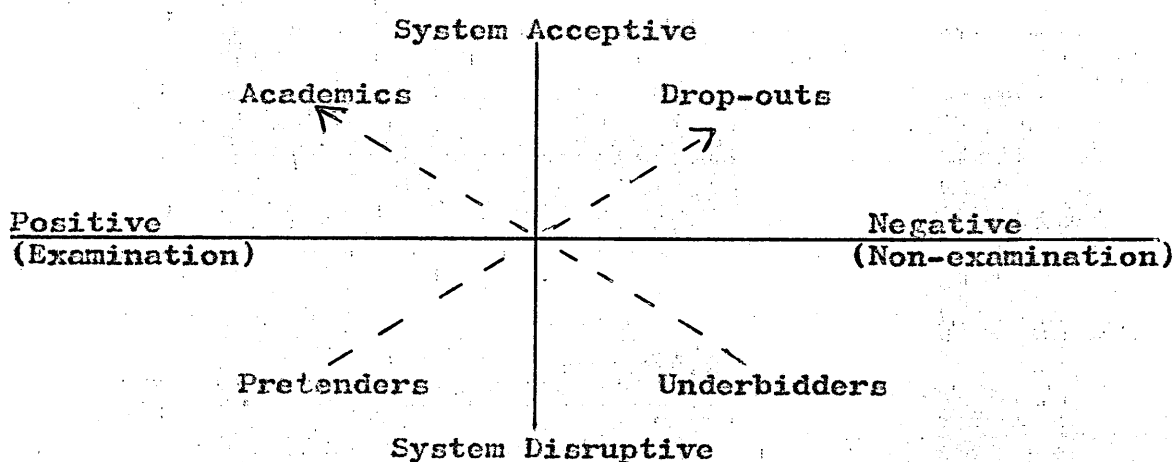
VI The Teachers: Choice Mediators

Teachers, of course, acknowledge that there is not a completely free choice, but there is a belief that the advice and guidance offered is given in the best interests of the pupil. This is a view I wish to contest in this section. As with Cicourel and Kitsuse's Lakeshore High School, this school's structure is determined by what happens at the end of the pupil's career, in this case the taking (or not) of examinations. Pupils are streamed and/or setted in the early years to facilitate optimum overall academic performance as defined by skills and knowledge deemed useful in the 5th year examinations. As at Lakeshore, early decisions can be crucial. Of one 5L group I was able to trace back, 27 out of 31 had come through the school in the bottom stream. This institutional channelling creates its own effects, and in association with group perspectives that form within the channels and the development of teachers' typifications, brings about a

crystalization of opportunities at a very early stage.
(Jackson, 1964; C.A.C.E., 1967; Lunn, 1970).

This is vividly illustrated by one aspect of the subject choice process, the rechannelling of misdirected choices. Teachers view pupils' subject choice in a way akin to Figure 4.

Figure 4 Types of Choices



This shows four basic types of choice from the teachers' point of view. The 'system acceptable' type pupil is one who interprets correctly the school and its processes and his relationship to it, and hence the implications of the subject choice, be it for examination or non-examination subjects. The 'system disruptive' pupils, however, have misinterpreted the cues, and made unrealistic choices, selecting examination subjects when they should have chosen non-examination (by ability), or vice-versa. The problem for teachers then becomes one of moving pupils along the lines indicated.

But who are these 'pretenders' and 'underbidders'?

Table 4 shows the changes that were made from pupils' first choices to final allocation. 'Positive' changes are those from non-examination to examination subjects; 'negative' vice versa; and 'neutral' are changes within the same standard. 44% of the whole, and proportionately twice as many boys as girls had at least one subject changed from his or her original choice and 60% of these changes were 'negative' ones. Nearly half of these came from 3c, even though many in that form had already made negative choices and, therefore, did not come into the reckoning. Most of the rest came from 3b, which is here showing its 'in-between' status, having some 'good' pupils, some 'bad'. 3a had two or three 'bad' boys who blotted 3a's copybook. 62% of the boys were involved in changes, compared with 30% of the girls. Clearly the vast majority of those requiring rechanneling came from the lower part of the streaming structure. There is also the suggestion of a sex difference.

Table 1 suggested that boys set more store by ability in choosing their subjects; Tables 4a and 4b show girls, perhaps, to be the greater realists, for far fewer of them were required to change, even though there are more of them in the year; and the most quoted perceived reason for having to change a subject was 'not good enough'.

Table 4a Choice Changes

Form	Nos.	No. in Form	Changes	Positive	Negative	Neutral
3a Boys	5	15	10	2	5	3
Girls	3	21	3	1	0	2
Total	8	36	13	3	5	5
3b Boys	15	17	24	2	12	10
Girls	10	20	16	2	7	7
Total	25	37	40	4	19	17
3c Boys	9	15	15	0	13	2
Girls	4	15	10	0	9	1
Total	13	30	25	0	22	3
All Boys	29	47	49	4	30	15
All Girls	17	56	29	3	16	10
Total	46	103	78	7	46	25

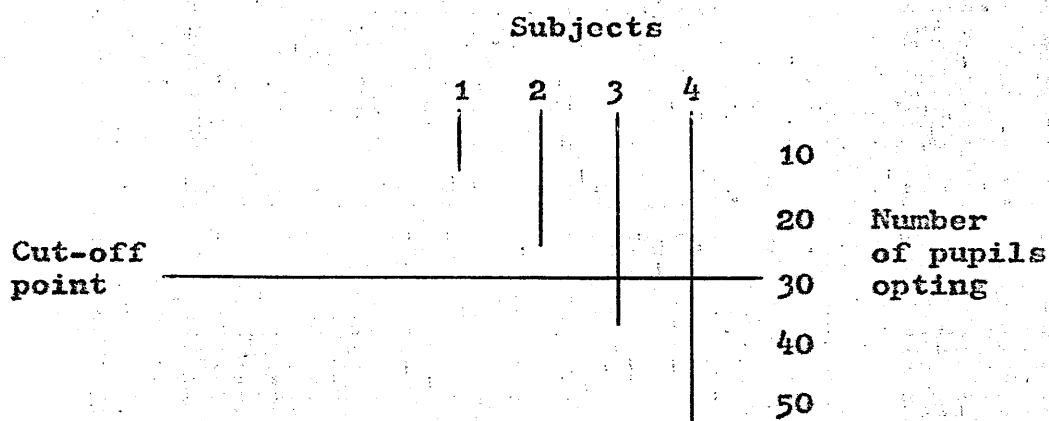
Table 4b Perceived Reasons for Choice Changes

Form	Set Full	Ability	Behaviour	Job	Don't know	Others
3a Boys	1	5	1	1	0	0
Girls	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	1	5	1	1	0	1
3b Boys	4	5	2	4	2	0
Girls	2	4	0	1	3	1
Total	6	9	2	5	5	1
3c Boys	0	5	0	0	4	1
Girls	2	6	1	0	0	0
Total	2	11	1	0	4	1
All Boys	5	15	3	5	6	1
All Girls	4	10	1	1	3	2
Total	9	25	4	6	9	3

Thus for many of those in 3c and 3b, this subject options scheme foreclosed options in that they were debarred from taking those few subjects which they felt positive towards, and which hitherto they had found rewarding. The 'integrated' nature of the scheme was proved in practice to be a gloss, and when these pupils reassembled at the beginning of their 4th year, the 'non-examination' pupils found themselves together in as neat a package as before. The institutional channelling, momentarily challenged, was thus restored.

There is another problem, again shown by Figure 4, namely the line between academics and non-academics. There can be no appeal to an absolute standard in drawing this line just as with the line separating success and failure in the eleven-plus. It is determined by the teachers, each for his own subject, and as with the eleven-plus, it might fall at different points, for much the same reason - resources. Consider Figure 5 illustrating the number of applicants for four mainline subjects (optimum number 30) and the 'resources' cut-off point in relation to each.

Figure 5 Numbers opting for four main subjects



With subjects 1 and 2, there is no problem from the resources point of view; but with subject 3, 6% need to be excluded, and with subject 4, 41%.

This points up the uneven nature of the redistribution problem. But teachers will already have exerted influence to try to achieve these results less brutally beforehand. Their teaching and assessment, culminating in the all important examinations at the end of the 3rd year, gives most pupils a sound idea of their 'ability' at school subjects.

This is the most powerful factor underlying all others in the acceptance of pupils to subjects - i.e. teachers' definitions of success and failure. (Beecham, 1973). We have already seen in the section on the pupils how many of them (and their parents) had internalized these definitions, accepted the consequences and chosen 'realistically'.

'We're not the brainy ones, they are.'

'How do you know?'

'Well, they are.'

Though, occasionally, there is a spark of protest:-

Amanda : They think because we're in a lower form they think we're dibby and we can't do it on our own. But then they never give us a chance to try, do they? That's why we have gone off homework and don't like it - 'cos everybody thinks we're

dibby and they don't give us a chance, you know. That's why we don't want to take exams and don't like teachers.

P.Woods : Do you ever get called 'dibby' or anything like that?

Amanda : Well, they put it in a nice way. They say, 'You're not as intelligent as all the others, and you ought to do so-and-so.'

Linda : Or they'll give you that strong impression, you know, talk to you like babies. One teacher goes over and over it so we understand, and he goes 'do-you-understand?' (mimicking a babyish measured voice).

Interestingly, those who interpret teachers' behaviour towards them in this way are usually those who overreach themselves in subject choice and have to be corrected. To guard against this, a teacher might use special pre-option techniques. The teacher of subject 4, for example, possibly anticipating a big redistribution problem, gave a talk which had the effect of cooling out several 'pretenders'.

P.Woods : Why didn't you choose subject 4 in that group?

June : We'd get too much homework.

Mavis : Yeah! She don't 'alf put it on...you'll 'ave to work all the time - an' homework! You think, 'Oh! I can't do that!...Oh! Talking about it made me feel ill.

As with Cicourel and Kitsuse's counsellors, teachers' judgements are not based simply on past achievement. In estimating the likelihood of future examination success, other factors are also important. I asked the teacher of subject 4 what were her principles of exclusion. In making up the optimum number she employed three - 1) the 'best ones'; 2) those who seemed to have the 'right' attitude; and 3) from 3c, the three who seemed to be a 'cut above the rest'. It was no good having problem people like John Church.

'He's too lazy. He lays around, and if he gets his pen out, he lolls around saying, 'Oh, Miss!' I can't take the risk. It spreads like cancer. Who starts it, initiates it, I don't know. I haven't time to motivate, inspire, correct for behaviour and so on, so you must cut out all the miscreants and thickies. You just haven't got time. They do drag you down. Now, Sharon Brown - nice girl, parents didn't want her in that form. I think once she gets out and in with this lot, they'll pull these three (from 3c) up.'

This teacher is articulating the system's rules and by tidying up the 'misplacements' illustrates how the wedge is even more firmly driven between two types of pupils. These two types, and who falls into them, are clearly identified, as is their within-group influences. So also are the criteria for success, which include apart from past

performance, 'attitude' and a 'cut above the rest'. The social undertones and divisiveness become explicit towards the end. Family background can be decisive. It can rescue, or condemn at the eleventh hour.

Apparent also is the classic dilemma of the upper secondary school teacher - concern for the individual while operating within the constraints of a structure which allows very little room for manoeuvre.

Figure 6 Examination overlaps

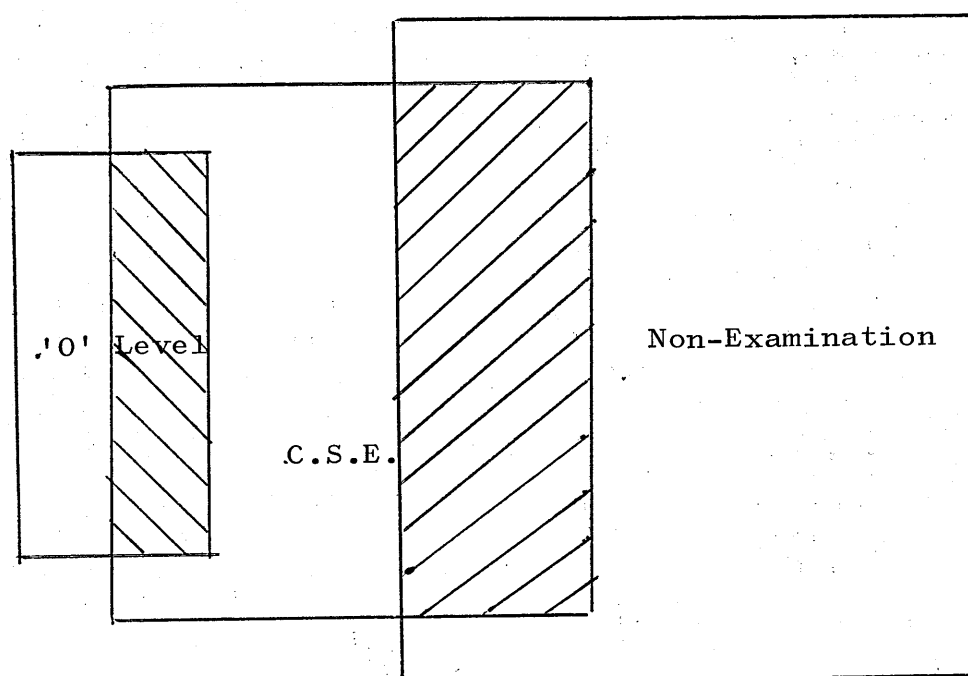


Figure 6 illustrates this structure. The three blocks relate to three groups of children characterized by expectation of performance in the 16+ examination. The shaded areas are where adjacent groups overlap. For teachers, they can be high tension generators, for there is pressure on the teacher to achieve a high proportion of

examination passes. Usually this might be interpreted, as Cicourel and Kitsuse with their counsellors, and Becker with his moral entrepreneurs purely through the concept of professionalization. Here, however, a critical external agency increases the pressure, indeed, for some teachers could be held responsible for it. In the ordinary course of events, a teacher might gain relief by ensuring that the shaded area in Figure 6 is as small as possible, ideally non-existent, which would mean 100% examination passes; or, of course, he might not feel under any pressure, especially if his results are deemed reasonable. But, as noted in Chapter 3, at this particular point in the school's history, numbers are seen to be very important. For the school is about to become comprehensive, and to receive pupils formerly admitted to the high status town grammar and high schools. The strain towards better and better examination results is seen by the teachers as a public relations exercise in honour of the parents of such children to convince them of the school's credibility as a respectable academic institution. One of the effects on teachers is to cause them to monitor the selecting of subjects with great care. It is unavoidable, even in traditionally less constrained subjects like Creative Design.

• 'A lot choose Art, yes, and you know why don't you? I'm not fooled. I say to them, "Why do you want to do Art?" I say, "I know, but come on, you tell me" and they say, "Huh, I don't want to do old Biology or whatever; all that homework and so on." It's an easy option and

they go for it on both lines. My results this year were pretty poor which rather proves my point. But what I do is this. I pick those with most artistic ability and I like to be seen to be fair. I don't spring this on them either. I tell them all this at the beginning of the third year. I tell them they'll be judged on the quality of work that goes into their folders, and then towards the end of the year, I get them to lay it all out, so they can all see, and, of course, some are very good and some are pathetic. There's no other way, not if they want to take the exam. If they just want a skive, they can do it somewhere else.'

Here is 'justice' being seen to be done, and opportunity given for pupils to make their cases. With its free and informal atmosphere, and its different, non-exacting work-task, the 'Art' options are a natural attraction for the diffident counter-cultural chooser. But the Art teacher is subject to the same forces as his colleagues and the same criteria must apply.

What direct counselling of children by teachers came to my attention also seemed directed towards the preservation of institutional channels, while expounding the rhetoric which legitimated it. In his address to the 3rd year pupils, for example, the headmaster showed a conservative,

selection-orientated, instrumental and elitist approach. The 'choice' pupils made was represented as the most crucial decision they would make in their school career, indeed as one of the most important decisions of their lives. Hitherto they had been merely 'getting a taste' of subjects, but the next two years were 'for real'. They counted for something in the world at large. This essential link with the occupational structure was emphasised in his advice on their approach to choice. They would obviously think in terms of 'what they wanted to do' after school. He gave examples, then warned against choosing subjects because they liked the teacher or 'environmental studies because they were interested in what goes on round the canals.' They were urged to think first if they were 'good at it', and secondly, 'what use was it going to be to them'. The importance and meaning of examinations was explained, and they needed (besides working hard when they got in an exam form) to ask themselves whether they were good enough in the first place to take an exam subject, or if they ought to take a non-exam subject, in which, of course, there was 'nothing shameful' - people were needed for all sorts of occupations. Where there was competition for places, they could only resolve it by the fairest method - having a test to see who was 'the best'. Throughout his talks, the headmaster stressed the basic utilitarianism of the decision and the school's traditional ways of resolving difficulties.

This is interesting for what it adds to our knowledge about the philosophy behind the scheme and about the kind of

advice being directed at pupils. We might hypothesize, however, in view of pupils' different group perspectives on subject choice, that the signals would reach one group but not the other. This seemed certainly true of the latter, for of twenty 3c pupils interviewed during the three days including and following the address, only two could remember anything about it. I received comments like:-

'I never listen.'

'It's too boring, he goes on for so long.'

'She was showing me her photographs.'

'Advice', therefore, could hardly be considered a factor, for this group at least. The same applies to the senior master's 'counselling'. Empowered with responsibility for running the scheme, he had more involvement in it overall than any other teacher. But his individual 'counselling' came at the end of the chain, and, as we have seen was channel-restorative. He told me that the process worked like this:- First, pupils filled in forms indicating their first preferences; second, subject teachers were informed and asked if they would accept those selecting their subjects; some 'thirty or forty' were thus referred back and required to make a second choice. These he was 'able to give a fair amount of his time to', and proceeded to 'negotiate with teachers on their behalf'. He was also on the lookout for 'choices for friendship' and 'correcting for career' which involved 'going through the whole list'. However, though, 'guidance was available, a great deal of

responsibility was placed on their shoulders'. No doubt some individuals benefitted from this advice and intervention, but clearly it is operating within the very severe constraints of the institutional channelling current in the school; and any scheme requiring a large amount of self-responsibility surrenders decisions not to individuals, but to group perspectives. Taking into account the various examples given in this section it appears that teacher mediation does not operate in the interests of the individual pupil, but is predicated rather on considerations of status, career and professionalization, rendered particularly acute by the critical external agency of parental pressure. Mediation then takes the form basically of alerting pupils to the ideal-types (and their own approximations to them) which serve the purpose of those ends through the agency of 'good examination results'.

Some of the staff at least were not blind to the hypocrisies in the system and wanted it scrapped and incorporated fully into their professional jurisdiction. They would question, however, not the criteria of their mediation, but the mechanics and the products of it. They were the only ones who knew which children 'stood a reasonable chance', yet this system put them under pressure from pupils, parents and headteacher at both ends of the examination course. They 'bent over backwards' to accommodate everyone, then when it came to the homework, the pupils 'didn't want to know'. In other words, when they relaxed the strict application of their criteria for selection, and enlarged the shaded zones

in Figure 6, the pupils concerned failed to observe the norms required of the group. Another thought it 'ridiculous making these decisions before the examinations, and misleading parents in many cases about the actualities, encouraging them to think their kids are more capable than they really are.' Others blamed parents for not honouring implicit pledges to keep their children up to the mark.

In summary, it appears that teachers do most of the 'choosing', albeit by rather tortuous routes, which lead some to protest and yearn for 'cleaner' decisions. Pre-choice tactics include communicating to pupils a 'proper' notion of their ability and of the 'rightful' place in the school structure; heading off pretenders, encouraging underbidders (though this last was not very evident - perhaps because unnecessary); removing the stigma of the drop-out choice; and establishing the legitimacy of the whole procedure by, for example, extolling the fairness of selection techniques. Post-choice tactics include persuasion based on the criteria of ability and aptitude, which appear to have social class overtones, and only in the last resort ruthless exclusion. The overall aim is to get the pupils to articulate the teachers' decisions. That teachers go to such lengths is a testament to the pervasiveness of the progressive, pupil-directed ideology. The reality, as revealed in this study, is an indication of the power of basic structural forces.

Conclusion

A comparison between within-system and extra-system functions

provides another perspective. Within the system schemes like this have four main functions: 1) There is some option within groups of subject, if not of routes. However, we have seen that some groups of pupils have more option than others; 2) It does give some pupils and parents an opportunity to relate, to some extent their school careers with prospective occupations. For those on the 'deviant' route, for whom school has a different meaning, it is an opportunity to select those subjects which best support that meaning, though there will be problems if a subject is also an examination one, as with Art, above; 3) It helps to consolidate the image of the school as a meritocratic and democratic institution; 4) It serves as a kind of hiatus in the school programme which can be used as yet another motivating device. As we saw earlier, pupils are urged to regard the past three years as a kind of limbering up for the real business of the final two years. With self-selected subjects and teachers, new courses ahead, the prizes within sight and the past all behind, the activity attending the process of subject choice, with parents drawn into the act, is visited with an urgency and a seriousness which might hopefully wash off on to the studies which follow, to the credit of both pupils and school.

However, in a wider sense, the subject choice scheme is serving the implicit school policy of selection inasmuch as 1) subjects are grouped in accordance with recognised patterns associated with occupation career; 2) Two broad

channels allow for those who 'opt in' and those who 'opt' or are ruled 'out'. The non-examination provision can be viewed, therefore, as a form of social control. (Bernstein, 1971). 3) Pupils are encouraged to choose those subjects in which they have most ability and which are most related to their likely future occupational careers. 4) In rationalizing the picture that emerges from the last point, teachers apply those criteria which promise to lead to the best overall examination results. Priority is given to the elite. 5) 'Interest' and 'liking' are played down.

The four within-system functions, therefore, are serving a system of sponsorship mobility behind a 'contest' mast. (Turner, 1971). There is an illusion of a range of choice, of selection of personnel delayed to the last moment (immediately prior to the commencement of examination courses), of a common starting line (everybody in with a chance), and of common fare (roughly the same subjects up to the end of the 3rd year). In fact the range of choice is variable among the pupils, non-existent for some; the pupils have been 'channelled', that is to say selected (at eleven-plus, and no doubt earlier, and selected again in the school's streaming arrangements, and possibly 'hidden' streaming before) long before they come to the 3rd year; different social origins lead to different educational experiences, the difference being reinforced by the prevailing pedagogical paradigm; and these differences have repercussions for what is taught to different groups. Despite meritocratic overtones, by the third year most pupils

have developed group perspectives; they know their places, having internalized teacher definitions of success and failure and their application to themselves with the usual labels ('thick', 'dibby', 'lazy', 'pest').

For them subject choice has different meanings. Generally speaking, to the initiated generally middle-class pupil it is his choice, and he makes it carefully with a view to job, ability and prospects. To the estranged, generally working-class pupil it is a line of least resistance, and even that at times presents problems. This scenario is complicated, but sharpened still further by the changing status of the school wherein the unseen and unspoken influence of potential 'sponsoring' parents is felt by teachers to exert great pressure on them, through the mediation of the headmaster, to produce better and better examination results. While this ultimately might mean more joining the elite ranks of the examination pupils, it does not, of course, alter the basic division and the principles on which it rests; in fact it increases it, since teachers will feel compelled to sharpen their selective and pedagogic techniques to guard against the increased risk of 'contamination'.

With these powerful forces structuring their policies and activities, teachers 'mediate', choosing the arena, making the rules and providing most of the equipment (including the pupil's own view of himself) for the game of subject choice. For them, the game is to guide pupils into the right

channels to get the bell of examination results to ring. The criteria they use are past achievement and future potential. For all of these factors, we know that there is a strong connection with social class, though it is not a simple one. The middle classes are at home in this arena, the working-classes strangers. It is in this sense, most powerfully, that pupils' subject choice is socially structured. But we have seen also how, even within these severe limitations, social factors such as degree and type of parental advice, within-group influences, cultural impressions on teachers (a 'cut above the rest') or simply parents' savoir-faire of the middle-class milieu, can exert an influence, and indeed at times retrieve apparently lost situations.

One of the basic questions arising from this analysis of school structure and function as evidenced in the subject choice process is, 'How is school possible?'. Given the teachers' humane commitment and dedication to altruistic ends, which I became convinced of during my stay, how can they accept, indeed prosecute with such vigour, their role in exacerbating these divisions? And how can pupils, on the receiving end, put up with it? I shall examine the teachers' position later. First, I look at the pupils. A great deal of heat and passion is generated in certain areas during the summer term of the third year over subject choice. However, the crucial decisions having been muted, discussed, argued about, grieved over, given rise to great hopes, consternation, bewilderment and anger, analysed,

spurned or ignored, and eventually, ultimately and irrevocably made or accepted, pupils go through the third year gates on their next great journey in life. How do they cope with it? This is the subject of the next four chapters.

Note

To date, the field of subject choice has been largely the preserve of psychologists interested in correlations between personality factors and subject choice. The most well-known one perhaps is Liam Hudson's famous distinction between divergent and convergent thinkers, and their predisposition for Arts and Science subjects respectively; (see Hudson, L., Contrary Imaginations, Methuen, London, 1966). In a recent review of the literature, five times as much space is taken up with personality factors as with 'other possible causes'; (see Pitt, A.W.H., 1973). The most recent, comprehensive work on subject choice takes for granted the general context of school and society, though much of the basic data supports the social structural model outlined in this chapter; (see Reid, M.I., et al., 1974). The model is also supported by another sociological study currently in preparation; (see Ball, S., Subject-option Choice. Selection and the Management of Knowledge, Chapter 6 of Ph.D. thesis, University of Sussex. In fact the parallels between this study and my own are quite remarkable. For instance, Ball concludes:-

'In effect then the selection decision for 4th year options and subsequent examination attainment at 'O' level and C.S.E. at the end

of the 5th year, and later entry into the occupational hierarchy or higher on further education, are all critically influenced by the allocation to bands at the beginning of the first year. This is, in its turn, based upon educational identities created in the primary school. The separation into bands is linked closely to a stratification of knowledge and the differential access to high status knowledge with high negotiable value...given the relationship between banding and social class the basis of the differentiation of access is primarily that of socio-economic status even here in a Comprehensive school. This form of early selection and the subsequent 'warming-up' of the band 1, predominantly middle-class pupils, and the 'cooling out' of the bands 2 and 3, predominantly working-class pupils fit...an elitist sponsorship selection ideology.' (p.40)

If the basic model holds, then it applies to all processes of choice throughout the school. This is supported by studies of occupational choice; (see especially Ashton, D.N. and Field, D. (in press), Youth Workers, Hutchinson, London; and Roberts, K., From School to Work: A Study of the Youth Employment Service, David and Charles, Newton Abbott, 1971); for a general summary of work in this area see Speakman, M., Occupational Choice and Placement, Unit 5 of Course DE351, People and Work, (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1976); and for studies of attitudes of senior pupils to higher education see '16 and 18 year olds: Attitudes to Education', D.E.S. Reports on Education, No.86, July, 1976 and Reid, W.A., Choice and Selection: The Social Process of Transfer to Higher Education, Journal of Social Policy, 3, 4, pp.327-40; though Reid, in the area of University applicants, prefers to relate social class with a number of other factors as possible determinants of choice, and suggests that 'it

might be more worthwhile to look for differential success rates within, rather than between, the conventional social class groupings'. (p. 338).

CHAPTER FIVE

PATHWAYS TO CONFORMITY

The question immediately arises as to what consequences these divisions, crystallized in the subject choice process, have for the pupils. My concern here is not so much with the objective consequences, as with the pupils' experiences of them.

Schools are multi-faceted institutions, and reactions to different aspects of activity or organization can also be variable. According to my conversations with pupils, they distinguished between three such sub-divisions - curriculum, institution, and teachers. Individual pupils can differ in respect of each of these, and among them, accepting some subjects or some teachers and rejecting others, or possibly being so swamped by institutional factors that no teacher or subject can compensate.

In this chapter, I examine the reactions of two sets of representatives of these two groups in the shape of the top 'examination' form, 4A, and the 'non-examination' 4L. This particular study shows common curricular acceptance, though for different reasons. Equally, both groups show common opposition to certain 'institutional' factors. In their appraisal of teacher qualities which they are likely to accept or reject, both groups are inclined to accept 'teacher-person' qualities and reject 'teacher-bureaucratic' qualities. Interestingly, this is even more significant with the more bureaucratically-oppressed, examination form. Aspects of teachers that are disliked are often in the area where they are impinged on by the institution, or where they

are acting in strict interpretation of their 'teacher' role. This supports one of the main themes of this thesis, that it is the bureaucratic apparatus of the school, rather than its educative function, that divides and oppresses, and that this bears on all pupils, regardless of their social background.

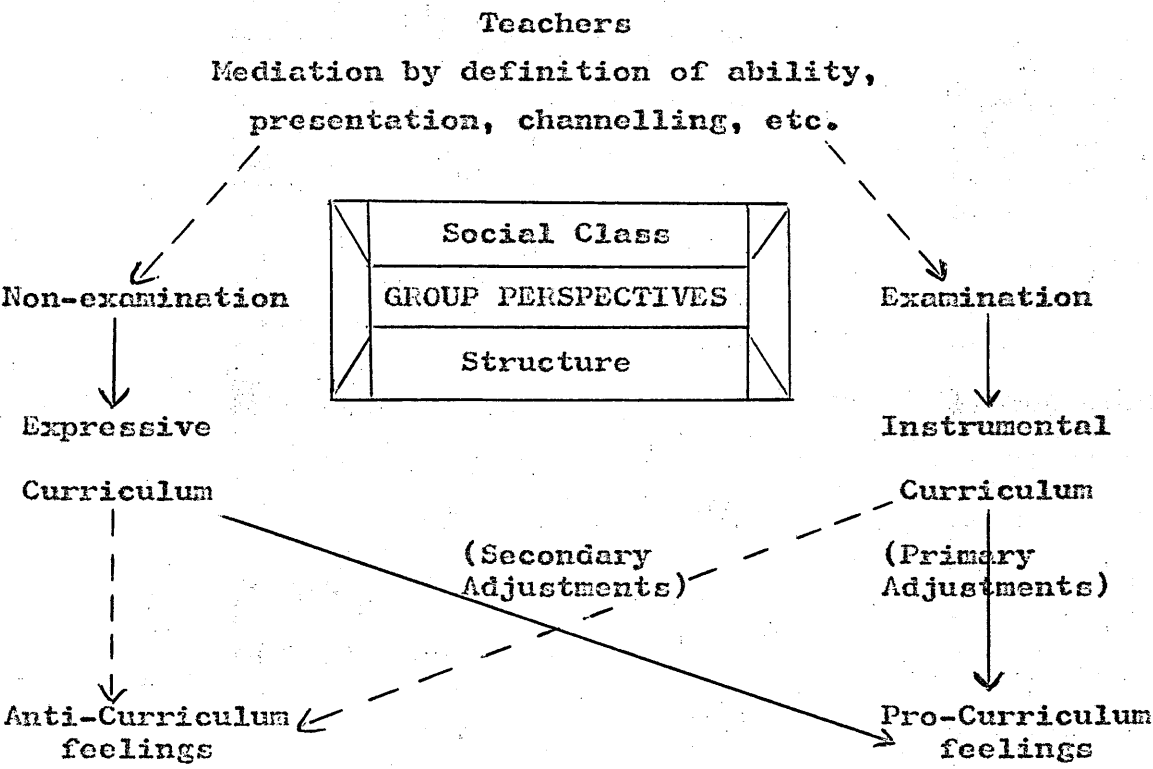
Indeed, inasmuch as greater bureaucratization is brought to bear on pupils in the examination form of generally higher social class background in the school's mainstream programme of instrumental certification, they might be the greater sufferers in this respect. Their general instrumental conformity, therefore, has to be qualified in this respect.

It might be thought, given a basic conflict situation, that pupils might frequently manufacture grievances, or make more of them than is actually the case. In this instance at least, however, the teachers of these forms agreed with their pupils, particularly over 'institutional' matters. It is perceived, therefore, as a common enemy, which all too frequently intrudes into the teacher-pupil relationship. Teacher views are given at the end of the chapter, together with examples of their different aims for these two forms. Those for 4A are marked by a distinct instrumentality, those for 4L a more indistinct generality. One wonders whether this is tacit recognition of 'colonization', or even encouragement of it in fear of 'rebellion' or 'intransigence'. (Woods, 1977). Thus what might appear as equal 'conformity' on the part of both these forms to 'curriculum' is in fact

'colonization' on the part of 4L, and a readjustment in school aims in line with that, to achieve a kind of spurious conformity. It makes for a more peaceful life.

I begin by recalling the basic model linking these forms of adaptation to group perspectives. (Figure 7). I then discuss the reactions of these two groups of pupils to aspects of curriculum, institution, and teachers, with teachers' own comments following.

Figure 7: Pupil Adaptations to Channelling



The central concept is 'group perspectives'. I described in the previous chapter how, faced with the problem of subject choice, pupils employed different interpretive models, choosing subjects on the one hand for instrumental reasons (job-related, ability, etc.) and on the other for

social or expressive reasons. These, however, were their social reasons. (Easy work, fun with friends, etc.) rather than educators' (leisure, citizenship, maturity, etc.)

These group perspectives are shown as emerging from the social class structure. The two broad groups referred to above went their separate ways - either to a largely examination-oriented or to a non-examination oriented curriculum. Teachers are shown as influencing this routing in the usual ways. The examination groups, mostly instrumentally oriented already, are processed through a heavily instrumental programme geared to examinations. They have made 'primary adjustments', which 'fit in' with the roles and expectations the organization has for them. (Goffman, 1961). It is not surprising that they have largely pro-curriculum feelings. The non-examination group moved into an expressive curriculum, one deliberately geared to 'education for citizenship'. (Social studies, environmental studies, community etc.). In some ways its social orientation coincided with their own social values, that is to say the work was easy, non-demanding, sometimes fun and interesting, they had more freedom and they were with friends.

It, therefore, aided them in making 'secondary adjustments', that is to say ways of standing apart from the role prescribed by the institution and 'making out' or 'getting by'. (Goffman, 1961). Hence, 'school' becomes more palatable, and this route also can lead to pro-curriculum feeling. Of course, this route might lead to anti-curriculum

feeling. Pupils might fail to make secondary adjustments, or those they make might be insufficient.

Curriculum

I made an intensive study at Lowfield of two forms, one non-examination (4L) and one examination(4A). Both were curriculum supportive in accordance with the above model. 4L completed a questionnaire, indicating their liking for subjects (discounting the teacher as far as possible) on a 5 point scale.

Table 5 4L pupils' liking of subjects

	Like a lot	Like a little	Neither like nor dislike	Dislike a little	Dislike a lot
Totals	81	75	29	12	17

This seems to indicate a generally favourable acceptance of the formal curriculum. As might be expected, the same was true of 4A, with even fewer dislikes. However, investigations into the reasons for their largely favourable disposition revealed vast differences. As might be anticipated from their attitude to subject choice, 4A's main reason was utilitarian, i.e. subjects were associated either with jobs they wanted, or more generally they would lead to a certain class of job. Indeed, in only one instance, out of 29 interviewed, did a pupil express a satisfaction for a subject because she liked it (this was

for Music), and even then she rated it below Chemistry and Biology, which 'could be handy for a job in a hospital'. This is 'instrumental compliance'. (Woods, 1977). Here are some other examples:-

'I'm not really bothered about Geography because I can't see how it's going to help you later on.'

'Only one I'm satisfied with is Metalwork, because you can do things when you get out that you couldn't do without it, that's the only thing.'

'The most important subjects are Chemistry, Maths, English and History, because I need them for my future career. I need a Science subject and an Arts subject as well as English and Maths.'

It is hardly surprising, therefore, if vocational orientation is the main criterion, that the girls on the 'Commerce' course (in 4C) seemed the most contented of all, from the point of view of subjects. This course has much greater linkage to actual job in terms of nature of work than more traditional courses.

4L's approach to school knowledge, though they profess a similar degree of contentment, appears to be very different. In that form only one pupil (out of 31) seemed to be vocationally motivated in his appraisal of school subjects. The others judged by intrinsic interest or sheer physical

pleasure. Thus 'Games' is popular. Other subjects might have their good points for 'unofficial' reasons, e.g. in the opportunities they provide for a 'laugh':-

'Well, Metalwork is quite interesting. Sometimes you have to chip down the walls. Last week me and Ken took two barrels across to empty them, and on the way back we were smashing into each other with 'em, sort of mucking about as we came back.'

Social and Environmental Studies are popular because they contain matter that is useful to know:-

'Well, you want to know about the place where you're going to live and work all your life, don't you?'

'You learn a lot in Social Studies...not to take drugs...blinking mad...you kill yourself.'

This would appear to reflect the different curriculum paradigms contained in the model above, and in that applied to subject choice. For 4L the paradigm might be summed up in the term 'Education for Life' or 'Education for Citizenship' as opposed to 4A's 'Education for Achievement' or 'Education for Jobs'. With regard to jobs, 4L seem either to know definitely what job they are going into, and none of them require any academic qualifications (e.g. farming, carpentry): or they do not know what job they are

going into, and don't particularly care at this stage. Whereas 4A are 'aspiring' in their attitude to jobs and their relationship with school subjects, 4L are simply 'freewheeling'. It is hardly surprising that most wish to leave at the earliest opportunity.

Institution

High curriculum acceptance, for whatever reasons, must be seen against a background of institutional constraint. Hostility to the institutional aspects of school was common to both 4L and 4A. There was much evidence of depersonalizing, bureaucratic and instrumental pressures:-

'Recently my life's been all routine; I get up in the morning, have breakfast, get on the bus, you know. I don't know how I'm going to stop it when I leave school, you know.'

School was likened to 'the army', 'prison' (the most used term), 'Colditz', and 'Stalag Camp 13'. Its influence is pervasive:-

'It's Homework mainly. I don't think you ought to do it. When you get home you want to forget school. You want to go out and do something instead of being stuck in working. It's like having continuous school almost.'

This type of complaint is intermingled with those of the growing young adult:-

'They've got too many rules. You're not allowed to go here, there, do this, do that...like every year it's worse. The area gets smaller and smaller...'

'I think the rules are too strict. Well, you know people smoke? In the summer they're caught smoking and the next day you're not allowed on the field in hot summer. You have to hang around here, and then they wonder why the windows get broke. And that gets me, that! They can't stop them smoking, because they smoke all the while. They'll always find another place.'

Favourable comments about the school can also be seen from the point of view of institutionalization. These took two main forms:-

- i) Institutional provision for relief from the usual constraints (a whole afternoon of games, activities, community service): and Institutional elasticity in interpretation of rules and constraints.

'I know people who go to other schools and they do envy us that we have so much outdoor activities, community service and so on, and a half day of games and choices in what we do.'

'You get a lot of games and things like that. I don't mind most of the subjects but you get a bit fed up.'

'We have quite a lot of freedom really compared with other schools.'

ii) Institutional elasticity in interpretation of rules and constraints.

'I like coming to school because you meet all your friends and you can have a right good old time.'

'Uniform rules get on your nerves. They should allow you to wear what you want within reason. (What happens if you don't come in uniform?) All depends what teacher I see. Some don't mind, but others - well! (You're not in uniform now. Can you come dressed like this and get away with it?) Yes, most of the time.'

Thus comments can be seen to hang around the degree of institutionalization. This is not to suggest that all by any means unequivocally condemned the formal structure of the school. Some thought the rules quite fair by and large; others thought so except for particular grievances (amongst which school uniform figured prominently - but mainly the fashion rather than the principle). But the chief complaint here seemed to be about the exercise of power, and how this

was manifested in the making and interpretation of rules:-

'They're always telling us to go off and just sit down and talk and play a game of cards or something like that, and when we do, we always get thrown out, and I don't think...it's a bit daft, isn't it...but what can you do? They turn the rules around to make things suit themselves, so when we follow one rule they change to another.'

'It all depends what mood he's in.'

'Sometimes a rule is just set and not explained. One teacher will talk it over with us, and explain why the rules are made in certain cases. Other teachers try and change the rules as well and make up their own rules.'

'They always think they know what you like best and that, what's best for you, like we're not allowed to go to our classroom, because it's unhygienic for us, but everyone prefers to go there because our friends aren't necessarily in our form. All your friends go to the cloakroom; that's where my friends go, and if they're not in your class then you don't see them.'

Teachers

So far in these two forms we have a pro-curriculum feeling (for different reasons) and an anti-institutional one (for

the same reasons). The third aspect of school - the teachers - contains elements of both.

The question is:- Which aspects of teacher behaviour, having repercussions for pupils' affective feeling, are considered to be most important and are these uniform among different groups of pupils? Discussing with these pupils the qualities they liked and disliked in teachers, I simply asked pupils to describe such teachers as fully as they could. To give a rough idea of the kind and distribution of responses, I categorized them into four types and counted as one mention each separate and distinct facet they attributed to each and every teacher who came into the reckoning. This gave the results summarized in Table 6:

Table 6 Pupils' Perceptions of Teachers

	Number of mentions	
	4L (N=31)	4A (N=29)
Teacher technique	36	53
Teacher disposition	31	59
Teacher control	21	9
Teacher fairness	11	17

The differences here are perhaps not startling. We might expect 4A to be more articulate than 4L, and 4L as a form to encounter more problems of control. Otherwise, matters of technique and disposition are clearly of high general importance. It would be wrong to regard this as a scale of

priorities. So often one category merges with another. Teacher disposition, for example, has clear links with 'control' and 'fairness', and may strongly influence the teaching 'techniques' adopted. This becomes clearer when we look at the components of each category:-

1. Teaching techniques

	<u>Liked</u>	<u>Disliked</u>
a)	Helpful, explains	Unhelpful, ignores
b)	Provides variety	Boring, monotonous
c)	Allows more freedom	Little freedom

Comment

- a) 'Helpful, explains' accounted for 21/36 mentions from 4L in this category. A teacher who is liked -

'will explain if you don't understand it.'

'will come round and help you if you get stuck.'

'If you go wrong, says "Go and have a go and then come back again."'

'explains how to do things clearly, and if you're not too sure will go over it personally with you.'

'spends more time with you.'

'won't have a go at you for asking a question.'

A teacher who is disliked -

'doesn't explain things properly.'

'explains it only once.'

'can't make anything clear to you.'

'doesn't spend too much time with you.'

'pays no attention to you, and don't help if you're lagging behind.'

'thinks he knows but doesn't know his subject.'

b) Variety. A teacher who is liked -

'gives you interesting jobs.'

'lets you do more jobs.'

'gives you a choice of jobs.'

Frowned upon is -

'when you all have to do the same job.'

'monotonous, boring stuff.'

'the same thing, day after day.'

c) Freedom (i.e. more democratic, not anarchic). A teacher who is liked -

'allows you to talk.'

'lets you get on without bothering you.'

'lets you do what you want.'

'leaves you to do things.'

'lets you walk round the room.'

'lets you finish work.'

A teacher who is disliked -

'doesn't let you talk.'

'every so often keeps telling you what to do.'

'talks too much, stops you and lectures you.'

'stands watching, but doesn't help.'

'never lets you finish.'

2. Teacher Disposition

Disposition is preferred to 'personality' or 'personal qualities'. The latter two terms imply something fixed and immutable. The former is the outward manifestation of the inner self as 'state of mind', and may change from day to day.

The main sub-categories were:-

- i) Cheerful, humorous, comical etc.
- ii) Friendly, kind, understanding etc.

Examples:-

- i) Cheerful, etc. A teacher who is liked -

'makes you laugh and you can work faster.'

'makes the lesson cheerful, makes it fun to do, even if you have got out of the wrong side of the bed.'

'is nice - you know, you can have a laugh with him.'

'gives us a load of jokes.'

A teacher who is disliked -

'doesn't like us. Gets mad easily. Picks on us for little things.'

'hits you.'

'You just can't speak to them as a person as well as a teacher.'

'Just tells you to get on with your work and that's that.'

3. Teacher Control

This is closely related to the last category, and was often expressed in personal terms. 'Shouting', 'hitting', 'yelling' were universally condemned, though most appreciated 'firmness' of control. Teachers who are 'too soft' or who 'threaten and never do anything' are just as much criticized as those who 'bully you', 'fly off the handle', or 'show you up'. There is a difference between 'always telling you off' and being 'strict, but nice', and between being 'bossy' and 'not too strict, but telling you off when you do anything wrong.'

4. Teacher Fairness

Again, this is closely connected with the two previous categories, but there were enough responses alleging discrimination to warrant a separate category. The two items most generally opposed were 'having pets' and 'picking on people'. Examples:-

Disliked are teachers who -

'show you up in front of the class.'

(Such a strong category in the senior school as a whole that I examine it separately in Chapter 8).

'pick on people instead of being able to stand a joke.'

'only teach the boys and forget about the girls.'

'take it out on the whole lot of you if one does something wrong.'

'get on about your writing a lot.'

These examples are taken from my discussions with 4L. They seemed to attach equal weight to technique and disposition. The table below shows how 4A compares.

Table 7 Perceptions of Teachers: 4L and 4A compared

Major category	Sub-category	4L	4A
Teaching technique	Helpful, explains	21	25
	Variety	5	13
	Freedom	8	4
		<u>34</u>	<u>42</u>
Teacher disposition	Cheerful, humorous	17	17
	Friendly, kind etc.	14	35
	Others	0	7
		<u>31</u>	<u>59</u>

The one outstanding difference this comparison reveals is the greater emphasis 4A puts on being 'friendly, kind, understanding etc.', both in comparison with their own other mentions, and with those of 4L. They seemed particularly impressed with the teacher's ability to empathize with them (or not):-

'If you sort of say something to him...some teachers would look at you in disgust...like in connection with being young, he accepts it from the pupil's point of view, he accepts that he

was young once and that he used the same language as we use and that sort of thing.'

'You don't have to be afraid to talk out or anything in his lessons.'

'If anything doesn't go their way it's the pupil's fault and they get the blame for it.'

'You're taught one thing at home, to speak your mind, and you get to school and do it, and that's it - teachers are away!'

'A teacher should be fair to everybody, treat you almost as an equal, not there to command you, but there to teach you.'

'Good teachers treat you like people, they come down to your level - you know, don't talk down to you or treat you as something different - outside as well as in. Other teachers are just concerned about their subject - they'll teach it almost because they have to.'

'If you had a personal problem you could go to him. He's just like your Dad really, you could say anything to him. He was understanding and he was a good teacher; he was just one of those we could get on with.'

'The best approach to make an impression on me is for someone to sit down and talk to you. A bad approach is someone who comes up to you, grabs you by the collar and starts dragging you along, that doesn't do anything really. When teachers do that, pupils dislike them more and it makes for worse trouble.'

'More like a friend than a teacher.'

Comparing these with the 4L examples, they are much more verbally extensive, though qualitatively similar. This apart, it is fair to say that they are making much more of it than 4L. Some possible explanations are:- i) Perhaps they are more sensitive, aware and more mature than 4L. ii) Their experiences of different combinations of teachers might have led them to different conclusions. iii) There may be more emphasis on academic achievement with 4A, and consequently a) less time for fostering good personal relationships on the one hand, and perhaps less perceived need for it, and b) more occasion for personal conflict between teacher and pupil over standard of work.

Some of this shows through in the following contribution from a boy who said he liked the work but didn't like the place any more.

'I used to like it. There was an atmosphere of friendliness about the place - you could talk to most teachers, but now it's getting larger it's not...and the teachers, I don't know some of the

teachers, and there are some I've never even spoken to...well, perhaps there were one or two you didn't know when you first came in the first year, but that was all. Now, I don't even know, not even spoken to five or six of them. The friendliness of the place is gone...and it's really gone, and it's really changed since the first or second year. So I think I don't really like the school now. It's more like a school than it really was when I was first the first year, and that's why I don't really like it.'

I asked him what he meant by 'more like a school now.'

'Well, if you go into a house, there you feel some sort of security that you're in your own house, and when you came to this school, we didn't. It seemed different from the house, but you sort of...you was at home here, you could...you know, you knew what you could do and what you couldn't do, but now everything seems to be a sort of a...going away from pupils and teachers. And we don't seem to know them any more now than they know us better...and that in the first year we knew each other quite well and we knew what we liked and what we didn't like.'

Here we get a suggestion of how institutional change and forms affect relationships, in this case for the worse. Was this generally felt or acknowledged, for instance among the teachers?

Teacher Mediation

Reactions from the staff were sought to this study of these two forms, and they were all given a copy of the results and a questionnaire. The reactions were particularly strong and illustrate aspects of teacher mediation in the development and progress of the two groups, as referred to in Figure 8. First, as we might expect from the subject choice syndrome, all those who taught 4A agreed emphatically that there was more pressure on them there than with 4L type groups to 'achieve results'.

'There certainly is - on 'O' levels. Mrs. Gamble said, "This is the most academically run school for the least academic children I've ever been in" - and that just about sums it up. It's always getting mentioned, always with you. You're expected to get blood out of stones. The children here are less stupid than the working class kids at my last school in town. Teaching my mixed-ability 'O' level, C.S.E. groups, I tried talking, researching, filming - all that kind of thing and making their own notes, but they were not well done, so I reverted to dictating - and it's terrible! But they like it and prefer it, because it's less work. So there's pressure

there. Some of the kids are very exam success prone. John Starkman says, "Why can't we do 'O' level Geography?" Parents also like it - that's what they want, and they're important.'
(Mrs. Nelson)

'The standards and presentation cause great concern in both. For the 4A type there is the yardstick of the exam, but they expect to be spoon-fed - an automatic route to exams without urgency or personal sacrifice, and so they settle for existence rather than pride in their work. The 'L' child sees no point in standards, and the teacher has no sanctions to operate against academic indifference for the 'L' child. With the lack of thought, and lack of cash in setting up ROSLA courses, it is hardly surprising the 'L' child wants to be taken out of a captive situation. Equally so, the 'L' child is captive to the teacher.'
(Mr. Timpson)

These differences are reflected again in the different aims teachers profess to have for the two groups. Some examples:-

1. Aims for 4A: To help them reach a good standard of work and become more confident in their work.

Aims for 4L: Basically to try and establish a good relationship with them and give them encouragement in their work.

(Mrs. Coles, Housecraft)

2. Aims for 4A: To give them as good an examination qualification as possible commensurate with their ability, and to develop a love of learning, particularly a desire to discover by experimentation so that on leaving school they have a deep desire to continue with a developing educational process.

Aims for 4L: To encourage an interest in and appreciation of Science and scientific method, so that the pupils have a desire to 'find out'. To give them an understanding of the world in which they live and an appreciation of the major problems facing the world.

(Mr. Garrett, Science)

3. Aims for 4A: To provide a sound springboard for examination success, but not merely to stuff them full of ammunition, rather to make them aware of the range of the subject by providing introductions; I like to trigger off interests (often within the exam syl.) and let them pursue.

Aims for 4L: Often to correct the missing links in basic knowledge, so that in the working situation there is not an 'embarrassed' series of gaps in their general educational equipment. This is not 'textbook' knowledge, but geared to practical situations, and expressed in mundane terms.

(Mr. Timpson)

4. Aims for 4A: Aiming at a successful exam result, but, at the same time, hoping to prepare them for the successful running of a home and looking after themselves

(and a family).

Aims for 4L: As for 4A - but minus the examination result. A slightly broader approach because of the lack of restrictions.

(Mr. Stewart)

5. Aims for 4A: To give a broad understanding of the way in which historical factors influence our lives and behaviour; to respect the past without sentimentalism; to attempt to inculcate the beginnings of wisdom; incidentally, to let them obtain a piece of paper.

Aims for 4L: The same as 4A (less the incidental), but from a different approach.

(Mr. Harvey)

Thus the differences between the two groups, the heavy instrumentalism of 4A, supported by parents and fostered by the school hierarchy, and the comparative purposelessness of 4L in school terms, throwing them back on their own cultural resources, together with differential aims and pressures teachers felt themselves in teaching the two groups, thus furthering the division, was supported by the staff.

The second point of interest was their support and sympathy for the boy who claimed 'the friendliness of the school had gone.' For many, it was the major factor, for it pinpointed their major concern - school ethos, the atmosphere in which they work. For some it was part of a general malaise attributable to the declining powers and misguided schemes

of those directing school policy. But for most, it was a consequence of increasing numbers, together with growing instrumentalism.

'Increased numbers. Less time to know pupils.

Up to this year (500+) I knew by name and sight every pupil in the school. I still aim to do so, but it is becoming very difficult.'

(Miss Sparkes)

'I agree with the boy that the loss of 'friendliness' is due partly to the increasing size of the school.

I am certain that 200 is an ideal number for a secondary school. This increase in size has brought an increase in unnecessary hierarchy -

year tutors, duty rosters, etc., all of which has the unfortunate effect of removing responsibility from where it should belong - with the form teacher.

In a small school, a form teacher has an opportunity to know and understand his form, and the pupils feel that they are the particular responsibility of one member of staff who has a personal interest in them and their welfare. I feel that many members of staff do not possess the same degree of sympathy with the problems of a 4th or 5th year pupil that they possess with the problems of a 1st or 2nd year pupil.'

(Mr. Garrett)

'Increasing conservatism in staff. External examination pressure. Need to prove worthy

of new (comprehensive) status.'

(Mr. Groves)

'Because of a) increased size of school, therefore less knowledge of individual pupils and b) as a result, groups get taught rather than individuals, and c) younger pupils have more enthusiasm and want to please more, and therefore a teaching situation is more friendly naturally.'

(Mr. Fuller)

'Obviously the growth of the school is a factor.

Also the children are far more aware of the academic rat-race, and so become more self-orientated. The trend is more towards "taking" than "giving" to the school; they are more calculating than previously. Also, the breakdown into strict exam courses (often one teacher per subject for 2 years) means that it is rare to see the bulk of pupils regularly.'

(Mr. Timpson)

'Partly because of increasing numbers of new-comers not used to normal life; partly because children of this type become "pseudo-sophisticated" in their middle teens owing to social pressures; I would qualify these remarks by saying that there is greater empathy between myself and 4L pupils and between myself and the more able 4A pupils than with the mass of "in-betweens".'

(Mr. Harvey)

'1. The increase of numbers. 2. A reaction (perhaps over-reaction) against the very familiar approach of young teachers. 3. A reaction against the hurtful way some of our colleagues have been treated.'

(Mr. Martell)

Clearly, teachers are equally at the mercy of many institutional features, and feel helpless to change them. The effects are mediated through them to the pupils, often quite consciously. Thus, even in reply to a question based on the pupils' generalized complaint about teachers' unreasonable use of power, eight accepted the point, while only six opposed.

'But this is due largely to the very difficult position in which the teacher himself has been placed.'

(Mr. Garrett)

These teacher comments lend support, sympathy and validity to the pupil views expressed in this chapter, as well as indicating certain features of teacher mediation. The question of institutional impact on teachers will be taken up in later chapters.

Summary

Items such as 'liking school' and 'social values' are seen to be predicated on other and different considerations when viewed through the frameworks of group perspectives. School

is a multi-faceted institution and pupil response can be uneven. At Lowfield, among one particular year there was high curriculum acceptance rate, but for different reasons between two groups; for the non-examination group, the 'social values' they attributed to their curriculum were not at all the same as educators' 'social values'. There was common feeling against institutional factors, even favourable comments about school in general hinging on relief from institutional constraint. Comments about teachers could also be interpreted as depending on their degree of institutionalization, dislike arising from ultra-rule consciousness, uneven and irrational use of power, formal and depersonalized relationships, superior attitudes, as well as certain aspects of pedagogy and personality. Certain differences in reactions to the latter two aspects correspond to differences in educational routes, and may be a product of them. Teachers' own views supported these results, and gave indications of how their mediation of institutional and other factors operates in the 4th and 5th years.

We have seen, so far, how pupils, influenced by group perspectives, which have their origin in social class background, are consolidated in initial divisions by teacher policy and school organization; how, in the face of these divisions, their adaptations might vary according to certain aspects of the school. We have not yet seen how these adaptations work out in pupil life-styles; that is to say, what pupils actually do. This chapter has been concerned

with pupils' evaluations.

In the next three chapters I examine three of the most prominent features of Lowfield pupils' experience of school - 'working', 'having a laugh', and 'being shown up'.

Note

Recently considerable attention has been given to how pupils react to school, with emphasis on the pupils' own point of view. The nature and degree of this emphasis varies from inferences derived from preconstructed categories, (Morton-Williams, 1968; Smithers et al, 1974), through 'naturally-elicited' constructs based on the personality theory of George Kelly, (Nash, 1974), and symbolic interactionist studies relying on observation techniques but 'heavy' researcher analysis, (Quine, 1974; Delamont, 1973; Furlong, 1976), to phenomenological and ethnomethodological studies which seek to preserve the 'integrity' of the situation still further, (Torode, 1977; Harre and Rosser, 1976).

Methodologically there are vast differences among these offerings, but some common ground might be discovered. We learn that Hargreaves' and Lacey's polarization of pupils' sub-cultures within the school into 'academic' and 'delinquent' (1967) is too rigid, (Quine, 1974; Furlong, 1976), and that there is not necessarily an anti-school group, (Quine, 1974). Pupils are overwhelmingly utilitarian unless they are not doing examinations, when they might have expressive interests. (Morton-Williams, 1968; Smithers, 1974;

Nash, 1974). Teachers do not always act as they say they do or will. (Quine, 1974; Keddie, 1971). Pupils like good order, warm, friendly relations, teachers who 'explain' and are interesting, and dislike weak, unfair, unfriendly, boring teachers. (Nash, 1974; Harré and Rosser, 1976). Pupils have their own rules, which teachers would do well to know about. (Nash, 1974; Harré and Rosser, 1976).

However, there are problems in relating these studies together. It is well known that pre-constructing categories delimits the area of investigation and channels responses. The channel such studies sail up may be a minor tributary in the pupils' scheme of things. While not entirely invalidated, they can mislead, out of context. Smithers, for example, (following Morton-Williams) infers too much about the meaning pupils attach to his 'expressive' items, having assumed already of course that school 'objectives' generally are of importance to them. School-leavers may well value 'social' or 'expressive' goals more than 'stayers', but they may not be the school's social goals. Quine goes some way toward acknowledging this. He found nearly all his sample seeing school as a means to an end, thus frustrating the hopes of the champions of ROSLA who had emphasised the social benefits of the extra year. However, he does say that some appeared not to understand the question asking them about how school might aid their leisure, maturity and citizenship; while that on vocational ends was relatively clear-cut. Quine also found most of his pupils saying they liked school, and 'this acceptance of the school

regime was stronger in the bottom sets or streams'. We are given no indication of why they liked school, and if this differed at all among the pupils.

Much of this shortfall comes from a static conception of school and teaching. A more dynamic account of how pupils evaluate teachers is given by Gannaway, H. (1976).

These three elements - pupils' own interpretive processes, the manifold structure of the school and its own activities and the pupils' dynamic relationship to it - all need to be represented in accounts of pupils views. I consider the matter of typifications further in Chapter 10.

CHAPTER SIX

PUPILS AT WORK

'Teach us, O Lord, to labour and not to ask for any reward, save that of doing thy will.'

In this chapter, I turn to pupils' constructions and experiences of schoolwork, and suggest ways in which they are associated with developments in society. Hierarchies of work correspond to curriculum hierarchies; and again the experience of work seems to depend a great deal on relationships with the teacher, suggesting a 'convergence' of pupil perspectives around social criteria during these two years of school. A closer focus on work as an activity reveals its negotiative properties in all its forms and for all pupils. I have not attempted, in the next three chapters, to pursue the distinctions between two basic groups of pupils, though reference is made to them here and there. My 'theoretical sampling' was limited to that extent by the logistics of the research pattern, the subject choice study coming towards the end of my stay at the school. The material here, therefore, should be seen as constituting some major categories of pupil experience, leaving aside the matter of their distribution. Some, however, are sufficiently common among all pupils to suggest the pervasiveness of institutional factors, as discussed in Chapter 5, and/or that of the predominant working-class background culture, while the distinctions arising in part from the school's channelling processes are also evident.

The exposition falls into two parts:- Part A is concerned with attitudes and perspectives. The general theme is that

a gap has opened between teachers' Protestant ethic-type notions of work, and pupils' own perceptions of work.

Pupils resist socialization into an antiquated model which is losing structural support in society at large, and about which teachers themselves are rather ambivalent, and are not always moved by the thought of personal gain. They are, however, deeply influenced by the status of the work and the personal qualities of the teacher. For them, work is relationships.

Part B is concerned with reactions and strategies. Pupils go to school to work. There might be a lot of gaps in the system, and a hidden curriculum, but the central official activity is without doubt 'work', for all concerned. School rituals, pedagogical orientations, examinations and careers, are all geared to its production. It is rather surprising, therefore, that we have no direct studies of what this phenomenon 'work' means to teachers and pupils. There are several that make certain official assumptions about pupil categories which means we do not know how central they are (Morton-Williams and Finch, 1968; Smithers et al, 1974); some that take a true ethnographic approach, but mainly with counter-cultural groups, whose main aim and activity is in the avoidance of work and its replacement (Willis, 1977); and some that are concerned with the approaches to it (Nash, 1974; Gannaway, 1976). In all of them, the central experience (if indeed there is one) seems to be taken for granted. I examine it as a negotiated activity.

A. Relating to Schoolwork: Some Perspectives

Pupils are not paid wages for their work and for many, the purpose behind the product is equally mystifying as 'God's will'. Some have concluded that there is little relationship between school and 'the world of work'. (Carter, 1966). Correspondence theories, on the other hand, seek to show a degree of inherent similarity between school and work. (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). The emphasis here is not so much on content as relationships. At school, it is held, pupils learn the social relationships appropriate to a capitalist society. If some are mainly engaged in 'defeating the school's main perceived purpose - making you work', (Willis, 1977), this is a form of adaptation that will serve them well in later life. Above all, they come to accept things for what they are.

Most of these studies focus on the teachers as perpetrators, either intentionally or, more commonly, unintentionally. (Sharp and Green, 1976). First, however, if we are seeking more general influences on conceptions of and attitudes towards work, there are some to be found that cut across class divisions. I, therefore, begin with a consideration of 'the meaning of work'.

The Meaning of Work

The distinction is commonly made in society at large between pleasurable work, which involves making things, and 'labour' which one engages in to survive and which 'leaves nothing behind it'. William Morris championed the cause of 'craft

work' against the toil and curse of 'slave's work'.

(Briggs, 1962). The latter has been seen to be increasing, and possibly moral concern at this was behind the attempt to establish progressive styles of teaching in schools, seeking to transform what had become little more than hard labour into more creative work. As Arendt has said, 'The industrial revolution has replaced all workmanship with labour, and the result has been that the things of the modern world have become labour products whose natural fate is to be consumed, instead of work products, which are there to be used.' (Arendt, 1958, p.124).

This, then, raises questions about the centrality of work in people's lives. Some hold that it has now become a peripheral element, or at best a means to an end, and that they now seek enrichment and fulfilment in their private lives through their own interests and hobbies. (Berger, Berger and Kellner, 1973; Luckman, 1967). The metamorphosis of work in industrial society has led to a breakdown in the old meanings of work. But schools are enormously conservative institutions in some respects. Rather paradoxically their 'progressive' solution to the modern malaise, purportedly in a spirit of advancement, was conceived around old, outmoded notions of work which now lack cultural and structural support in society at large. Protestant ethic-type notions of work abound in school. The categories used of pupils are usually framed in these terms - 'idle', 'lazy', 'good worker', 'industrious', 'needs to work hard', 'more effort needed', and my study school, for one,

seemed preoccupied with instilling the moral virtue of the industrious worker. Its hopes of winning must have been based on optimism at its chances of overcoming other influences, or a belief in a basically instinctive 'homo faber' or 'homo laborans' which they needed to awaken. However, attitudes to work are learned, and they are learned partly outside school through cultural permeation. Teachers wish to inculcate other, often contrary attitudes, which have become structurally outmoded, and to which they themselves only partially contribute in practice. (See Chapter 8). What happens in school under the label of 'work' is largely an accommodation to these two oppositional tendencies. Teachers seek to bridge the gulf by various 'motivating' devices. The whole school day rings to the sound of inducements to work. But general exhortations and the cultivation of a 'workish' climate are limp forces beside the quality of the work and the quality of the teacher, as perceived by the pupil. In all this, 'work' is not easily defined. Rather, it is a 'patchwork of diverse values and purposes, displaying many contradictions and inconsistencies.' (Fox, 1976, p.18)

Hierarchies of Work

There is a hierarchy of work as there is a hierarchy of knowledge. (Young, 1971; Hextall and Sarup, 1977). One can distinguish on one level, differences between 'O' level, 'C.S.E.', and non-examination work; and on another, within these varieties, work that is meaningful, work that is productive, work that is play, and work that is useless.

One distinction was made between the examination work of the 4th and 5th years, and the 'junior' work of the first three years in the school. Frequent references were made to the size of the disjunction. Suddenly, they were treated like adults - 'It was more like a break of ten years than just the one.' They were not supposed to come late to lessons now, were expected to set an example to the whole school. But it was the increase in work-load that hit them most, 'because in the 3rd year we didn't do much, but in the 4th and 5th years we had to do a great deal more.' Teachers were 'more strict', the work 'a lot harder'. They suddenly found themselves doing 'masses and masses of homework'.

The distinctions among varieties of examination groups are revealed by examination pupils commenting on their non-examination colleagues:-

Diane : I think they do more social work - learning about the community more than actual education like Maths and English an' that.

Vera : They've been going out a lot, and been doing work around the school, going out for Community Service.

P.Woods : Is it as worthwhile as the programme you've been on?

Diane : I think it's worthwhile in their own way because a lot of them aren't intelligent enough to take exams, some of them are, but not all of them... and they spend their time doing a worthwhile programme really. They can't learn much in

Maths and English, that sort of thing, but they learn about the community.

The divisiveness among groups of pupils and their accompanying characterizations fostered by this division of labour and knowledge is clear and all pupils recognized it, though not all believed it legitimate. C.S.E. work apparently, is only semi-proper.

Kerry : I regret having chosen History. It's boring; I find the teaching methods a bit off-putting though I like the subject-matter. I used to, at any rate, before the exam course. The teacher tells you everything. I would have liked to have done more work, more things myself, more practical work, like. In Geography too, that would help.

Shirley : I agree about C.S.E. History group. We were neglected in favour of the 'O' level group and spent much of the end of the 4th year and all of the 5th year doing a project.

Elaine : Yes, he taught the 'O' level group separately in a different part of the room, and left us to get on with it.

Shirley : We never actually got taught anything for the actual exam course, 'cos the project's only part of it, see.

Elaine : Mind you, towards the end he did give us books and tell us to get on with it ourselves - revising and reading about it.

But the men of 'iron' were the non-examination forms:-

Steve : It would've worried me to get into 4L because the only way to get on outside school is with exams. You've only got to look through the daily paper - 3 'O' levels for this, 4 'O' levels for that.

P.Woods : What have 5L done over the past couple of years then?

Steve : They went out on lots of trips, more than we did, and they've been doing different things round school - like doing the greenhouse up an' that.

Martin : They just seem to do odd jobs around the school.

So the non-examination forms, 4L and 5L are not engaged in 'proper education'. The pupils are making the distinction between mental and manual labour. Actual education involves cognitive processes, but 4L are not strong on these, so they learn by 'doing'. It is clearly seen as inferior.

The most important prestigious work is that done for examinations. This is so important that the work done by non-examination forms is often rated valueless:-

'We had to keep working to do exams this year, they didn't. They haven't anything to aim at. They just keep going till they leave. They're not left with anything really, because they could've left at the end of the third year - and they've still not got anywhere now. They've just done nothing.'

This applies to the examination pupils' own non-examination work like 'Community Service', which involved helping in hospitals, visiting old people, etc. This was adjudged 'boring' and not very 'meaningful'.

P.Woods : Would you rather have taken an extra subject instead?

Des : Well, not another subject, but perhaps visiting places of work, like 5L, where you see what they're doing and you'd see if you want to do that when you leave school.

Steve : Because that's to do with your future.

Des : I think the Community Service was just to get us out of school so that other kids could have a lesson, just to let other people look after us for a bit so other children could have the teachers.

However, this does not mean that all their activities at school were subsumable under work. Rather, work itself had to be put into another context. Time and again, these pupils, when asked what they valued most highly in school, replied, 'mixing with friends', with 'sports' a worthy second. Work was not usually enjoyable for most of them; in fact, at times, it was very painful. It was an accepted necessity, and inasmuch as it might have repercussions for the conditions and opportunities attending the delights of life, it had to be taken seriously. But as an intrinsic activity it hardly figures in their scale of priorities.

- Dave : No, I'm not actually looking forward to leaving school. I think a lot of people say they are, but when it comes to the actual day, I don't think they will be. I mean my sister always said that, then on the day she was very upset.
- P.Woods : Are you saying you enjoy school?
- Steve : Yeah, I have.
- Ken : It's been alright.
- Dave : I have enjoyed it, yeah.
- P.Woods : What, mostly?
- Dave : Sports, mostly.
- Ken : I think there'll probably be a lot more freedom than there is at work.
- Dave : Another reason - you've got all your friends here, so you come to see them as well.
- P.Woods : What about you, Steve?
- Steve : Yeah, mainly Sports, I suppose, Swimming, that's about it.
- P.Woods : Have any of you enjoyed the work? You're all telling me about Sport and mates. You might as well go to a recreation centre, but this is a school. Its purpose is to teach isn't it? What about the work?
- Ken : I think it's the teacher that makes the work interesting, you know. If you don't like him, you don't like your work.

This brings us to the second point. What matters to these pupils is relationships, with their friends, with teachers.

These are different 'relationships' from those posited by Bowles and Gintis, who suggest a correspondence between school and work. For these relationships are often produced against and in spite of the official programme. Further, the initiative for them is being articulated here by the pupils, from all streams in the school, and from all classes. If all is well here, work is accepted. If not, it presents uncommon difficulties, and other activities are elevated to first rate importance. But relationships are not enough on their own. The importance of the status of the work means that a 'recreation centre' would not, in fact, do just as well, or better. For it would lack the material support of the 'work' on which the economic futures of these pupils is seen to depend. This is why 'community service' is irrelevant, even though 'relationships' is its rationale.

Work as Relationships

Many pupils appear to hold the assumption, so long-lived within their background culture as to make it seem 'natural', that there is no or little intrinsic satisfaction in work. Work is distasteful, unwelcome, unpleasurable, painful, but perhaps necessary. Teachers provide a scheme of thought to accommodate pupils' unwillingness, yet still provide a rationale for motivation:- 'all work is like this - this is how it is - your reaction is normal - your minds must learn to accept this inevitability, but also pick up "out of the air" as it were, the crushing need to do it.' The reward, however, is somewhat obscure at this stage. It has to be taken on trust for a long time, in the form of

marks, grades and reports. This conception of work is reinforced by artificial stimulants which dominate the atmosphere of the school - on the one hand motivators, such as competition and inducement, appeals to vanity, pride and one-upmanship, and on the other, penalties - reports, detentions, reporting to parents.

This logic, lacking essential structural support is entirely dependent on trust. Thus the contrary paradigm on work is itself dependent on relationships. Through them, pupil need meets teacher aim. The articulation of this need shows a variety of adaptations to school, but a common concern with what they perceive as the human properties of the teacher. A powerful message coming over from all the pupils I spoke to at Lowfield was that work can be both odious and burdensome, and pleasant and enjoyable and that what makes the difference is not so much the content of the work as the relations with the teachers concerned. In other words, teachers can actually transform the experience. Many pupils accept the need to be 'made to work'.

'Yeah, I think they should be made to work. When you go to Tech., for example, it's your choice, so you're not made to work, but school isn't your choice, so I think you should be made to work, otherwise you wouldn't because it's not your choice.'

Many seem to accept this social Darwinist view of themselves as recalcitrant, and project an adult judgement on

themselves. Thus, forcing them to work is right, because it is 'for their own good', 'it helps them in the future', they are not 'old enough' to appreciate the benefits. They come to have a socialized instrumentalism, which does not always hold up in fact, and which is sometimes less clear-cut in the 5th than in the 4th year, illustrating the shifting sands of pupils' outlooks. Thus, although many talked in the same kind of instrumental terms as teachers, in work being important for future career, in actual fact many of those in the 5th year who had already secured jobs, and many who had a definite one in view, said they did not require examination qualifications. Even for some girls on the commercial course there was not a good fit.

Barbara : I'm going to the Tech. to do a child-care course for two years. I don't need any qualifications for that, but I've got to do Human Biology and Sociology 'O' level in the course.

Shirley : I'm going to work in a Day Nursery. I don't need qualifications. I already had the job at Christmas. Mrs. Warner asked me if I wanted to go down there.

This cut a lot of material ground from under teachers' feet and made pupils rather ambivalent. This, in turn, reinforced the emphasis on relations with the teacher, makes that, in fact, the basis on which 'work' stands. It all depends on how it's done:-

'I think if you were made to work in a different

sort of way, in a sort of friendly atmosphere...'

'If you've got the right kind of teacher. With some teachers, like if you like working in the lesson you do work hard, but other teachers, when you can muck about like, you enjoy it, but really at the back of your mind is really you should be working, and if teachers don't seem to take no notice of you and they're not interested in you so you don't feel like working. But with other teachers like Mr. Kingley and Mrs. Coles, you know they make you work and you enjoy it in a way. They made the lessons interesting, and they're interested in you, you're interested in them.'

These pupils recognise a need to work and their own recalcitrance. That means an acknowledgement of a need for discipline, but this other element is equally important:-

Kathleen : Some teachers can make the lesson interesting but that don't mean you're going to work. They've got to sort of treat you like human beings - you know, listen to what you want to say, not treat you like kids.

Work can be a weapon, bribe or reward in pupils' dealings with teachers:-

'He's always so happy, isn't he?...friendly. He comes down...like most teachers expect us to come

up to their level, he's prepared to come down to ours. He's more like a friend, isn't he? Because you like working for him, you don't mind. A lot of teachers you don't want to work for to spite them.'

Teachers, it would seem, could learn much from the human relations school with regard to industry. (Mayo, 1953; Whyte, 1961). To these pupils at least, it is not the work that is important, and any intrinsic satisfaction to be had from it is dependent on the relationship with the teachers concerned. This squares with their general emphasis on social criteria in their outlook on school.

'(The main thing I hope to get out of school is) relationships with different people, that's what I think. But I don't mix much when I'm out of school, and I've got a number of friends here, and I enjoy going around with them. That's the main reason with me.'

Teachers are not blind to this, of course. Talking about a 4 period block of environmental studies with a non-examination group, one teacher said, 'We might not get much work out of them, but it has a social value - at least we can try to develop some relationships with them.' However, this division between work and relationships did not hold entirely. Developing relationships had implications for how he (the teacher) saw their attitude to work. The girls had complained to me about how he favoured

the boys, and did not care about them. The implications are apparent in this comment he made to me about the group:-

'They're good lads, you know, they're earthy, but they're not villains. They're not angels, either, you know. They'll break the rules, but they're O.K. The girls, on the other hand, are a bit wishy washy. There's not one character amongst them. Basically they're idle. They'll all probably end up with jobs in Woolworth's.'

Thus, teachers' perceptions of pupils' work and their capacities are also mediated through relationships.

Work in itself does not seem a natural activity to these pupils, but it might be a natural adjunct of sociation. Where this is successfully established, work is a pleasure. Where not, it is a toil. This is just as true for the more instrumentalist examination forms as for the non-examinations. The same is true for teachers.

Work is the activity that produces the desired outcome. At Lowfield, these outcomes were always fixed by teachers - examination passes, exercises, projects, games. They would then deploy various strategies to get the pupil to perform the relevant activity. An interesting one at Lowfield which neatly fitted the pupils' preoccupation with sociation, was to collude with them, against a third party as it were - the 'school', the 'headmaster', 'society at large' or 'life'. In this way, the teacher removes his personal responsibility

for the productivity demands being made on the pupils, they are bigger than the both of them, and only through the trust built up between them can they consider it legitimate. The activity of the work is a joint, shared enterprise, subsumable under the general relationships - that is what makes it enjoyable. Elsewhere, with an authoritarian teacher, there is no such attempt at collusion. A different teaching paradigm is in play, and unless there are other factors promoting the worthiness of the work (such as personal ambition) the activity will be unpleasant and distasteful hard labour.

Alan : We had one teacher, he used to make us line up outside (others = Idiot!) file in single file, stand at your chair behind the desk, no talking, pen, pencil, ruler and rubber on the desk. He used to come round and check them, and you couldn't talk at all, and you mustn't move your chair.

P.Woods : But how did he treat you when you were working?

Alan : Say you're doing some work, he'd come up to you, and he'd think you're not doing it right and he'd start moaning at you, and he'll come up and say 'Good God, boy, what are you doing!' - some'at like that. You know he won't stop to see what you're doing. He'll tell you what you're doing wrong, but he won't help you to remedy it.

It should be noted that much of the teacher's conditions of

work militates against forming the desired kind of relationships, which are premised on individual contact and appreciation. Dealing with pupils in groups of classes (Lortie, 1976), the pressure of the system as mediated through headmaster, parents and examinations, the demands of professionalism and tradition point teachers toward a different model of teaching, as we shall see later.

In the previous chapter, I illustrated the concern roused by institutional factors in pupils' perspectives, and how this was common to all pupils. Other recent studies have observed the importance of school factors, in an academic climate of opinion which has been moving toward the macro sphere of explanation. (Reynolds, 1976; Carroll, 1977). Certainly, basic perspectives are influenced by class cultures, and clearly the school's hierarchies of work and knowledge can be linked to the class structure of society. But there is another dimension which cuts across the class factor, which we might term the 'institutional'. Inasmuch as there has been a flight from identifying the 'real' self in the institutional sphere toward the 'private' sphere (many of the working class probably never have done so), from formalized structures towards informal, from planning, control, discipline and achievement to 'permissiveness', the lowering of inhibitions, and the inner 'quest' for identity, a new emphasis is put on relationships. (Bell, 1976; Turner, 1976; Berger et al, 1973). This school illustrated a huge disjunction between obsolete models of work advertised by the school embedded in an outdated Protestant Ethic

ideology and pupils' interpretations of work. These pupil interpretations arise generally from shifting definitions and loci of self mediated to them through mass communications, changing patterns of child-rearing, career opportunities, and so forth; and they put the emphasis, not on the intrinsic qualities of work, the virtues of industry, nor primarily on the personal benefits to be gained. Motivation for these pupils was not to come from socialization into a work ethic, nor from an appeal to instrumentalism, but from the school's own valuation of work, and above all, the relationships with the teacher. The simple moral is to make the work count, and for teachers to be human. Fake products, however, or exhortations without structural support, are quickly spotted, and only compound the problem of 'how to get pupils to work', an issue itself embedded in antiquated pedagogy.

B. The Experience of Work

One way to represent the experience of the pupils I encountered is by the four categories along the dimension in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Categories of Schoolwork

Type of work:	Hard work	Open Negotiation	Closed Negotiation	Work Avoidance
	Conformists	Colonizers/ Ritualists		Retreatists/ Rebels/ Intransigents

'Hard work' implies full commitment, and is practised by conformists. (Woods, 1977). 'Work avoidance' at its

extreme implies total lack of commitment and is where the real counter-cultures flourish. However, the majority of pupils are, most of the time, found somewhere in between indulging in 'open' or 'closed' negotiation. Both arise from partial commitment and hence a mismatch between teacher and pupil aims, requiring some form of contract. Open negotiation is where parties are aware of the contract, move some way to meet each other of their own volition, and subsequently arrive at a consensus. Closed negotiation is where the parties independently attempt to maximise their own reality in opposition to and conflict against the other, and each makes concessions begrudgingly, and only if forced. However, they do make concessions, unlike the 'work avoiders'.

From all these positions, the experience of work is somewhat different and in the rest of the chapter I shall try to describe the three categories containing work for both pupils and teachers, concluding with some speculations on the forces that lie behind a possible 'shift to the right' along the dimension in Figure 8 in pupils' accomplishment of schoolwork, when teachers perpetually seek a shift to the left. I should make clear that I am talking about categories of work, rather than individual pupils, who can move among them according to subject, teacher, time of day etc., though pupils usually have a predominant mode.

Open Negotiation

Command of the process of negotiation is at the heart of being a successful teacher. Quite often, if the teacher

overdoes his concessions, the pupils will demand more and threaten to take over the lesson. It is also to be reviled as exceeding the norm:-

'He's a bit of a queer teacher. He's not like a proper teacher. He doesn't tell you off.'

If not enough concessions are made, pupils might become resentful, and potential colonisers or even instrumental conformists are turned into intransigents or rebels. What the standard lesson consists of then, is a number of checks and balances, prompts and concessions, motivations, punishments, jollyings, breaks and so forth, as the teacher displays his professional expertise in getting the most out of his pupils. While the pupils, seeking basically the comfort of their own perspective and reality will tend to react according to how the teacher's techniques mesh with that reality.

One of the most common gambits the teacher makes is to offer to do a great deal of the necessary burdensome work, 'carrying' the pupil along. For the pupil, this is what I would term 'distanced work', because the pupil himself is a long way from its point of origin. The most common illustration of this is teacher talking - pupil listening. It has many variants, including the standard question and answer, board work and doing experiments. Pupils are constantly reminded of the terms of the contract:-

Example 1

Teacher : I'll do the Algebra for you now. There are six methods of factorization. Give me one.
 (No hands go up, a certain lethargy). I'll make you do the lot if you start yawning!
 (Several hands go up).

Teacher : Formulae are getting longer and more complicated and your memories are getting worse. So what do they do? Give you the formulae to take in with you! There's not enough practice learning or memorizing these days. Do you have to remember passages in English Literature? (They shake heads).

Example 2

Teacher : (During experiment on expansion of liquids). I'm going to record the results now (noise increases in class). I gather some of you would rather write the whole double period!

Example 3

Ricky &
 Lawrence : (To me, after teacher experiment): We've got to work now. (They came back automatically after the last reading, armed with a piece of paper from the front).

Example 4

Teacher : I've talked enough. Now I think it's time you did some work. I'm going to give you four essay titles. Choose one and make a start in these last 20 minutes. You can get half your homework done if you get your minds on it.

In this last example there is a double bargain. The teacher has 'worked' for 20 minutes of the scheduled 40 minute period, while the pupils took things easy. Now it is their turn. Furthermore, extremely valuable leisure time in the evening is offered as an extra inducement. This teaching and learning is far from being an intrinsically co-operative enterprise. There is never a pure state of 'open negotiation' because of the disparity in position between teacher and pupil. Pupils have to be continually set up for it and reminded of the fairness of it, the necessity for it and what they immediately stand to gain from it. This has immediate impact, quite often the teacher appealing to their sense of fair play and relying on the bond between them to assume that they would feel it appropriately applied to him.

Teacher : (After a few admonitions at beginning of lesson, and one pupil getting moved up to the front).
I'm going to start with a promise, or two. In the second period we'll have a film - if you're good, and work well this first one! Then I thought next week we'd go out and do the nature

trail in the forest (pupils talking). I think you're adopting a very anti-social attitude, and that became apparent the moment you walked through the gate this morning. (Quiet, but a ripple of noise again). Now don't let me have to nag!

Here, then, is another element of the bargain - not only do pupils stand to gain pleasurable experiences if they comply, if they do not, they will earn the teacher's wrath and precipitate what Furlong's pupils called 'trouble' which, at all costs, they sought to avoid. (Furlong, 1977). Individuals might get 'shown up', (see Chapter 8), or verbally (even physically) assaulted:-

Teacher : If I hear another burble from your stupid little mouth, I shall push your head through the top of that desk! (With nose an inch from pupil's and eyes wide and unblinking. Ghostly quiet in room, and they go on writing).

Thus bargaining tactics of the teacher are not always pleasant ones.

Sandra : I think some of the teachers are frightening. They frighten you into working. I don't think it should be like that really. I'm frightened to walk into some lessons.

Lessons frequently proceed in this way, with pupils

exploring sometimes without particular intent, sometimes with, the boundaries of tolerance, with teachers continually defining them, though in ways that accord with general and particular teacher-pupil norms and rules. (Werthman, 1963; Blishen, 1966; Rist, 1970). What is being bargained for is often 'control' rather than 'work'. Here the distance between the pupil and 'work' is at its greatest. That is to say that there may be no passage through the pupil of the teacher-initiated activity whatsoever, even though there might be an appearance of it. (Dumont and Wax, 1971).

The extreme bargain derives from situations where children do hardly any 'work' at all, and teachers have long since given up trying. But because teachers can cause 'trouble' and kids can be extremely awkward, both trade appearances for tolerance. Much 'work' in the school day, therefore, is a huge 'con' trick, performed semi- or unconsciously. No productivity rates are required, there is no factory line, no next stage in the process waiting, and for non-examination forms, no examinations. The only kind of productivity rate demanded by 'supervisors' is a semblance of work and a semblance of good order. Interestingly, this is maintained when the teacher is absent. The semblance of work and good order will be preserved by the semblance of a teacher in the form of notes mediated through a proxy stand-in teacher. Notice how the bargaining is built into these notes:-

Classwork 2B/2H Thursday, 7th February

READ THE NOTES CAREFULLY AND THEN COPY THEM INTO YOUR BOOKS. ON TUESDAY I SHALL COLLECT 2B'S EXERCISE BOOKS IN AND ON THE THURSDAY OF NEXT WEEK 2H'S.

READ AND COPY THESE NOTES

(Two pages of notes and a diagram follow)

IF YOU DO NOT FINISH THIS IN CLASS IT IS YOUR HOMEWORK TO FINISH IT OFF. I WILL COLLECT YOUR BOOKS NEXT LESSON TO MAKE SURE YOU ARE DOING YOUR WORK. THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE TAKEN NOTES ON PAPER DURING LESSONS GET THOSE COPIED IN AS WELL.

There is a negotiated ambience in established classrooms which all implicitly recognize, and teachers and pupils are continually reminding each other of the terms, if one or the other steps over the boundaries:-

Teacher : Hey! Now look! We know there has to be a certain amount of noise - as long as it's a working noise!

Teacher : How many have not brought pencils? Now look! This is not on! You've been told before!

In stating the terms of the negotiation, some teachers keep constantly in mind the ideal product they would like to see. This is their pole position as it were. The pole position of most pupils in my study school was 'doing as little work as possible'. Again, the 'mass' nature of his work, causes

the teacher to take action on the basis of how the majority behaves. One or two pupils might aspire to the teacher's pole position. They serve to reinforce the point for the majority.

Teacher : I was a bit disturbed when marking these books to find only a few had finished off this work, the questionnaire on Page 124. It must be finished. But in order not to hold others up, we must press on. We're staying with education and I want to finish by break. Tomorrow I want a discussion - a sensible one - therefore do your homework properly. Question 10 on Page 16, I want some thought given to that. 'Parents should pay directly to the costs of their children's education' (All write). John, I want you to think of an argument for why parents should pay, and Steven, you second it. (But sir, I don't agree with it!). Never mind, I want you to argue for it. Tim and Harold, I want you to oppose the motion. The rest, I want you to think along those lines. Now do this, please, that's your homework, and we can have a good debate. We can always find less pleasant things to do.

(Next day)

Teacher : Due to some people not having done their homework, we'll have to postpone our discussion, and continue, straight on...

This teacher lays down the parameters of his objective and consistently reminds the class of how far short of them they fall. This may be a tactic to optimize their performance in the heavily teacher-directed class-work. However that may be, the pupils are a long way from involvement in this work and it is a good example of 'distanced work'. Even if not productive in the same sense, and thus enabling appearances to be substituted for reality, much of this bears interesting similarities to work on the factory line.

The literature abounds with parallels. Compare these extracts from research accounts:-

'The whole bench dreams like this. It is a galley of automatons locked in dreams.'
(Fraser, 1968).

'When I'm here my mind's a blank. I make it go blank.'
(Beynon, 1976).

'You can't expect much out of work - you just have to do it.'
(Carter, 1966).

'The technological environment is so overwhelming that nothing the foreman can do would really make the workers like the work they do.'
(Whyte, 1961).

'The mental demands of a majority of automobile assembly jobs are for surface attention; the work does not absorb mental faculties to any depth.'
(Miller and Form, 1951).

The significance of this similarity I shall discuss later. For the moment we might simply note that much schoolwork calls for only surface mental attention. It constitutes no challenge, calls for minimum skill, is marked by repetitiveness, yet pupils must pay some attention. Whether this is a 'cop-out' on teachers' part, or is simply the best they can get under the circumstances - getting nowhere with Protestant Ethic-type work, so achieving a semblance of it through distanced work - it succeeds, possibly because it bears many of the qualities of 'real' work in the world outside, and thus has strong cultural and structural support. Teachers, too, in some respects, are not dissimilar to managers, who view labour power as commodity. They are paid to think in terms of labour costs and productivity. (Nicholls and Beynon, 1977). As Hextall and Sarrup note, 'It is through the workings of the evaluation process that the work of pupils in school may be represented as a feature of commodity production.' (1977). Teachers also, therefore, are concerned with production, in their case mainly examination passes, but also references, in precisely the same way as managers. It is not surprising that the resulting product should so closely resemble the factory line.

There is a great deal of 'play' in pupil work. Teachers, who are interested in pupils' learning by whatever means, or if that is completely impossible, keeping them occupied in as pleasant a way as possible, often devise games as part of their teaching strategy. This again parallels management's

efforts in industry to counteract the effects of job design. (Davis and Taylor, 1972). Teachers thus provide curriculum forms to compensate for the basic curriculum, which, for many pupils, has these dehumanizing tendencies. This is one of the paths to 'good relationships'. Those teachers high on the pupils' list in this respect were adept at humanizing the basic drudgery with departures from routine, attention to individuals, skilful use of laughter, converting 'work' to 'play', and so on.

They will sell such activity to the pupils as 'play' both as a learning enterprise in itself and as a balance to more grisly business. Thus, Artwork, Pottery, Craftwork, Needlework, Domestic Science, Science experiments in the labs - such activities could often more appropriately be classified as play. Pupils might seek to transform any dull activity into play. For example, in one Physics lesson observed, pupils were set four problems of balance to work out. The class proceeded with these in a mood of happy and casual industry, chattering in groups, sorting through the problems, but with frequent and cheerful digression to the state of the football league or the current pop scene.

'You can't expect much from these,' the teacher told me. 'If you wield the big stick, they rebel. At least like this we stay friends, and they do learn something.' Some pupils thus are perceived as having 'limits' in their capacity to do schoolwork. Some need extending, others

need indulging. And for the latter there is much play, games and laughter. If the teacher can incorporate some of these elements into his programme, rather than allowing them a subterranean, illicit existence, he might achieve some learning via the back door, as it were. At worst, he will achieve a *modus vivendi*, and a spirit of sociability, which some might argue is more important than work, a view which would certainly accord with the 'relationships' preoccupation of the pupils.

Some teachers thus deliberately construct the learning process as a game. After all, it is not self-evident why one should have to learn about Roman villas, upland sheep, the area of an annulus, the Citizen's Advice Bureau, how to make a canoe, the principle of levers, similes, and so forth. Thus a rather dry Social Studies lesson on 'educational expenditure' was relieved by sending pupils all over the school to get essential information from the caretaker, the cook, the secretaries and so on. A History lesson on strip farming was lightened by allocating the class character parts in the mediaeval village. A project on housing was spiced by sending pupils around householders with a questionnaire. The point of the Citizen's Advice Bureau was incorporated into a strip cartoon and the pupils invited to supply the words. The pupils entered all these activities in a friendly and lighthearted manner. They were all games, with various winning points. (For example, pupils tried to outdo each other in rude repartee in the strip cartoon). They were certainly not 'work'.

Some pupils are considered incapable of much mental work at all. The 4th year 'Mathe Remedial' group, for example, could only 'work' as individuals in co-operation with the teacher. There were only six of them, but as the teacher moved on round the group, the rest fell into a completely different world of conker (one had a 120-er, only half of it left, but hard as iron), fireworks (screechers, air bombs, rockets and flares), bike-racing, trips to the toilet ('but put your cigarettes on my desk first!'), and ruler-fights. The high point of this lesson, which dominated their day, was when Vince asked if anybody had a pen he could borrow. Norman whipped open his jacket to reveal a festoon of pens in a crammed, glittering line, and selecting one at random, offered it to Vince. Unfortunately, it turned out to resemble very closely the pen that had gone missing from Vince's own possession but the day before. The teacher then had to exercise the judgement of Solomon, but to no one's satisfaction. Vince wanted his pen back, and if Norman lost it, it would spoil his priceless collection. Vince was eventually moved, but they carried on their feud from afar, with mysterious looks, signs and gestures. Both got all their sums wrong.

Teacher: Oh, Vince, what on earth have you done, you silly boy! You've added them. Where's the sign? Where is it, isn't it big enough? Really! You just can't be bothered! If I took the same attitude as you, dear oh dear! The mistakes you've made are inept. This one is totally wrong. Six plus six is twelve and three makes fifteen. How

do you get twenty-one? Is that how many
conkers you've got on that piece of string?

In the last remark, the teacher recognizes, if sarcastically, the paradigmatic influence of the pupils' social world. She might have done better to requisition the conkers as a teaching aid.

Hard Work

If negotiating more tolerable degrees and forms of work is the main activity, there are times when pupils do hard work! 'Copying notes from the board' can be meaningless as anything, but be extremely 'hard work' for some pupils. The difficulty lies in the extreme mental effort required in concentrating on the task, and in the act of writing. What has become easy and second nature to some, almost a natural extension of the self, to others poses the greatest problems.

'He gives us loads and loads of writing.'

'What I don't like is when they get on about
your writing.'

'e makes us do a load of writin'...I don't
mind the drawin', but writin' - huh.'

This might not be perceived as hard work for the pupils by the teacher, since he has devised the notes and written them on the board or dictated them. More likely is he to put into this category work that more obviously requires a

stirring of the mental processes and some initiative on the pupil's part, and that releases him, the teacher, from the effort of production. Thus, working from work cards, doing exercises - this kind of set work which involves some form of problem solving on their own initiative is the ultimate in pupil hard work to many teachers. So it is, of course, for many pupils. I joined in one group activity with some 'deviant' 4th year boys, based on a comparison of two housing estates. We had to find answers to a list of questions from the evidence presented in the form of photographs, statistics, tenants' comments etc. I taped this discussion, and playing it back to them several days later, one remarked:-

'Cor! We was workin' 'ard then! That's the 'ardest I've worked all term!'

Another interesting comment one boy made on hearing the tape was, 'Listen at the noise. You don't realise when you're there, do you?' Neither work, nor control always correlates with noise, the central feature of the hidden curriculum detected by Henry (1963).

What made this 'hard work' for these pupils was the extent of application of mind needed to grasp the series of problems, the creative task of coming up with ideas in interaction with the elements presented to produce solutions, all of which made it an individualistic effort. Contrast this with the routine procedures of 'distanced' work, which can either be a drudge in calling on one's

powers of attention, but nothing else (e.g. interest), or euphoric in permitting its sublimation in some other activity.

The greatest physical effort I witnessed at Lowfield was in the gym, especially circuit-training, which involved press-ups, shuttle-running, sit-ups, bench jumping, and rope climbing, all performed, of course, against the clock. The staff certainly perceived this as work of the first order. It involved application, determination and the utmost investment of one's physical resources.

'Old Gary Sampson, he works, but he never seems to be on his beam ends.' (P.E. teacher)

The Games teacher's approach was framed in a 'workish' rhetoric. Thus, in Games, pupils were often urged to 'work'. 'You must work for it' was often impressed on them. The techniques were ground out to them in forceful terms:- 'Serve, Dig, Catch! Serve, Dig, Catch!' Games involved skill, which requires practice, but other gym activity tests the limits of human endurance. Some pupils have an instinctive fascination for this especially after the boredom and distance of classwork, and will rally group support to push an individual on, as when they all shouted Gregory Beech up the rope for the third, very painful time within 60 seconds at the end of his circuit training.

However, contrarily enough, this does not constitute work for the pupil. The teacher could not ask for more, and he

knows how killing it can be. But for the pupil it is a respite from the usual school chore, an opportunity to expend a great deal of bottled-up energy in a direction that he can comprehend. For some pupils, therefore, it comes under a different and opposing category - that of 'sport' or 'games'. It is perceived as a peripheral activity within the school's official programme, but in some pupils' school lives, it is central - 'the best part of the week' - but as 'play', 'sport', 'leisure', uncontaminated by the alienating characteristics of 'work'.

Most 'work' is done by the examination classes. The rest of the school do very little 'work' in proportion to their other activities over the week. There was frequent reference to this divide. Exams meant 'work' for both teacher and pupil. 'No exams' let them both off the hook:-

Dianne : They should push you now and then, 'cos up till the 3rd year or 4th year really if you didn't want to do a thing, they just let you get on with what you wanted to do. They didn't tick you off much; they used to occasionally moan at you an' that, but I don't think they did enough about it really.

Vera : I thought that was the only time we really worked hard, for exams. The rest of the time we was just told to do some work and that was it. Then when it come to the exam and they mentioned that, we was all working very hard and I found it difficult really.

Dianne : As you get nearer the end of the school, you aim more for something than during your first years an' that. So you do work harder.

Elaine : In the 4th and 5th years you're more dedicated to work, other years you more muck about as well.

As discussed in Section A, much of this work is seen through the medium of relationships with the teacher concerned.

But what of the activity itself? Mostly I got the impression that pupils felt that they were 'shovelling away at a giant slagheap'. (Taylor and Cohen, p.203). This applied even to the supposedly 'creative' work of C.S.E. projects and English essays. This is illustrated in one way by the quantification applied:-

'I got a bit bored when I was doing the Geography project and I couldn't decide what to do and had to do about 40 sides, and after about 10 I was fed up with it.'

The same applied to the English 'Folder':-

Andrew : In English, homework was one or two essays a week, and that was purely for the folder, wasn't it?

John : That was about the 'ardest, building up a folder.

Shirley : I quite liked English actually. Miss Dickens, she's a nice teacher. The only trouble I had was with essays, you know, we had to do a folder for C.S.E., and we had to keep changing our

teacher, because Mr. Johns had to take us in the 4th year, and he'd come in once a week, and we had to do essays every weekend, sometimes two a weekend, and it really got us down a bit.

But mostly, for examination pupils, work consisted of attempts to commit to memory slabs of knowledge by various means of varying tedium.

Dave : The Metalwork homework was to copy 10 pages out of a book, and that took 3-4 hours.

P.Woods : Was that usual?

Dave : Every week, for a year.

Ken : It seemed pointless, because we kept the book anyway.

Des : The idea was to make us learn it, I think, but he said 'copy it down and learn it', but I just copied it down word for word and didn't achieve anything from it anyway.

P.Woods : Did it have any bearing on the exam?

Des : Not all that much.

P.Woods : Did you revise your notes?

Des : There was too many of them!

Steve : Time you'd learned your tools an' everything you couldn't learn it all. Not like History.

Dave : In History, we do the same thing - just copy - but we have tests, you see - so we have to learn it.

Daphne : I would have been happier taking fewer exam

subjects, because there's so much forcing you to do what you don't want. Then they try to cram more in at the end, and that was too much. Especially Physics, I found that very hard, and Chemistry.

I found few expressions of 'enjoyment' of work. This answer was typical:-

P.Woods : Was there anything you really enjoyed?

Julie : No. Nothing I really enjoyed.

Elaine : I didn't mind English, but I wouldn't say I enjoyed it.

Julie : It's just something you had to do. You had to do it, you couldn't get out of it.

Elaine : There's security at school. Other people are bothering about you. Other people are doing the planning. When you leave you have to do it all for yourself.

To many, that is the mark of reality - when you leave, and the best benchmarks for that are not to be found in school.

Kate : I don't think it's been really hard work. I mean when people go out to work, I bet they find it a lot harder than at school.

The demands of examinations appears to militate against the personal relationships so highly regarded by pupils. What seems fairly clear is that there is a misfit between demands

and resources. Suddenly and dramatically between the easily negotiated calm of pre-exam work and the rather exciting prospect of remunerated, independent, responsible and meaningful employment, comes this period of peculiar pressure, for which it was difficult to find a consistent rationale.

Shirley : I thought the normal homework during the year was quite interesting - Maths and English. I didn't mind doing them, but at the end when it gets towards exams, it gets you down a bit. They say you've got to learn this, you've got to learn that, or you won't pass your exams, and things like that.

Christine: When you start going over things all over again, that's what I don't like.

Caroline : Well, it was out of proportion. Physics we had hardly any homework, and we didn't learn much. In French we had couple of hours every time, and we don't have the time to do that in one evening, we've got other subjects.

Beryl : You're supposed to spend an hour for each subject, but Physics, you can do that in $\frac{1}{4}$ hour, French would take us 3 hours.

This work has a mechanistic quality:-

Debbie : I don't like Geography because it's all on the blackboard all the while, and I can't stand the teacher so...

Angela : He doesn't speak to you as...well, I dunno... 'e kind of treats you as machines really (yeah). It's 'come in' he'll say, probably talk about something, not very often, it's usually straight out of a book or atlases, or off the board.

Also it seems to squeeze out those other (non-work) areas of school life that make it a humane institution. So that, for some, it is the total impact of the exam programme that impinges:-

P.Woods : What will be the thing you remember about school most of all?

Heidi : Hard work!

P.Woods : Hard work?

Heidi : Yeah, no end of homework in the evening, especially in French.

Shirley : Teachers tend to push you too much in the 4th year, they watch everything you do, and generally keep getting on to you all the while.

Caroline : Yes, and, you know, a bit strict with you. They don't let you have no freedom whatsoever.

Barbara : It starts the first day of the 4th year. We have homework sheets every month. If we miss one lot of homework or two lots of homework we get 'unsatisfactory' and if you get two 'unsatisfactorys' you have to see the year tutor and get told off by him, get put on report and everything. Really gets us down.

That's why half of us don't do it really, to rebel against them, I think (laughs).

Not all my conversations with pupils were so dominated by a tone of 'complaint'. Many did express an enjoyment of the work here and there, though that was more difficult to pin down and was invariably defined through the teacher.

Closed Negotiation

'Open Negotiation' takes place together. It is a joint activity, based on a certain amount of good will toward each other, recognition of the value of co-operation, and belief in the possibility of consensus. But sometimes teachers and pupils take action independently of the other either in a spirit of less than goodwill or resignation, or in adapting to the circumstances that have been negotiated, thus engaging in the activity that I have called 'closed negotiation'. For pupils, this included skipping homework, pooling knowledge and resources, cribbing, skiving, tricking the teacher into doing it for them, or simply 'mucking about'. It is the most popular replacement of routine 'distanced' work, which can sometimes be a drudge, but on the other hand can often be euphoric in that, since it involves no interaction with the self, it permits its sublimation in some other activity. This experience, again, is remarkably like that of some factory-line workers. (Chinoy, 1970).

If teachers do not collude with them, and connive at the 'working game', as described in the previous section, pupils

will sometimes transform the activity of work into an activity of play themselves. Thus there is a great deal of playing at working, and playing at listening. Intricate class and individual games, which the teacher might ultimately detect as 'a lot of fiddling with pens and rulers' abound. There is a great deal of pretending to work while doing something else, time-filling, going through the motions for appearances to avoid 'trouble'. If they slip up, through sheer negligence or forgetfulness, they might incur the teacher's wrath:-

Teacher : Oh! I wish you people would come prepared for lessons!

However, since the chances of winning at this particular game of forcing pupils to work are remote, the teacher more often falls back on the old collusion, in exchange for some, if only a little work:-

Teacher : Paul! What have you done with the pencils? Who have you sold them to? Who can put him out of his misery and lend him a pencil?... That looks suspiciously like one of mine! Mr. Lawton's is it?...Anyway, when you've finished about from whom you nicked it, will you please get on.

There is a great deal of time-passing and time-fillings, not as an adjunct to a larger purpose, but as an overall end in itself. This is earmarked by endless performances

and rituals around the distribution, collection and finding of rulers, pencils, paper. The term, day, period is there, inevitably, and it is more necessary that it be 'got through' than is the syllabus, especially with regard to non-examination forms. Sometimes this is an ad hoc adjustment to the contingency:-

Notes - October 10th; periods 7 and 8; 4th year/5th year

Art and Pottery

Jack Lester is forced to take the 5th year Art group in the T.D. room for the second two periods, where he's on a hiding to nothing. That group sits around the table in there. Phillip gets on with his - which he's been doing all term - passing the time. Kim is reading 'Mad' and Possee is with his mates S.R., L.S., and J.T., who've been 'lobbed out' of Pottery. Jack is meandering aimlessly around, also time-passing. Having discussed Planet of the Apes and the Six Million Dollar Man, I say I'm going to see 4th year Art. 'I'll wander up with you,' said Jack, 'for something to do.'

Where there is a middle, there is a great deal of eating round the edges. At the end of these lessons, all had tidied up a good twenty minutes before the bell (reminding me again of queues to leave the factory some time before the stroke). Phil sits in his chair, watching them all suspiciously. 'A long day,' he says. He looks worn out. What a slog! 'The time goes slower and slower the longer it goes on in the afternoon,' he says. 'My watch is a couple of minutes fast, I think.' 'Now get on with your notes or read for the last ten minutes.' In fact, a

general chat ensues, as Jim talks to me.

The critical nature of time, as ruler of content, is often conveyed by teacher comment to pupils, perhaps filling a space in one lesson by talking about the next subject which 'will take us up to Half Term.' Or, by inversely talking about the compartmentalization of knowledge and how it is geared to time. 'That's got "maturity" done. Now we'll go on to "availability". We've only got "curiosity" after that, then we'll call it a day.'

In these examples teachers and pupils are similarly affected. In the following example different constructions of reality are more obviously in play.

4th year Set 5, Maths Observation: Excerpts from lesson

Noisy lot. First few arrivals are quite jocular with Len. David asks, 'What are we doing today, Sir?'

Len : Decimal division this afternoon, page 46.

Harry : Oh, these aren't too bad, Sir.

Len : Right now, pay attention everybody, just like you did yesterday. (Len explains how to divide decimals). Tell me what you do, Jane. (General commotion while Len tries to explain division of decimals). Just shut up talking when I'm talking, will you, you have the chance of talking when you're working. Listen to me now! Now pack up this chatting and turning around, will you!!

Fiona : What do you do with the decimal point, Sir?

Amanda : Which side goes which, Sir?

Derek : What page are we on, Sir?

Len : The idea of this introduction is to tell you how to do it, so stop asking questions!...
Now, when dividing, you move the decimal point two places to the left.

Amanda : Right, Sir?

Len : No, left!

Amanda : That's what I meant Sir, right left, Sir.

Len : You said, 'right'!

Amanda : I meant you were right, Sir!

Sheena : I said, 'left', Sir, I did!

(Later)

Sheena : Oh, Sir, do we have to do these?

Len : Yes, you do, it's very important. (He explains some more).

Sheena : You haven't moved the point.

Len : You don't have to with this one.

Sheena : Oh, it isn't 'alf 'ard, Sir! (Len explains some more).

Sheena : Can I have another piece of paper then?

Len : Well, you shouldn't have started yet!

Sheena : I did; I though we 'ad to!

Len : I've been here explaining. How do you know what to do before i've explained it?

Sheena : That was before I knew!

(Later)

Amanda : Sir, is that right?

- Len : No, that's not right! Look, you're all working and half of you don't know what you're doing! Why don't you put your hands up and ask?
- Sheena : Init 'ard?
- Len : No, it's not hard. It's ever so easy. It should've been done in the second year!
- Christine : Who invented the decimal point, Sir!
- Len (to me) : I thought I'd give them something easy to do so I could get on and mark their books - blimey!

Clearly there is not much agreed consensus in this lesson. It is a good example of 'closed negotiation'. Teacher and pupils attribute different meanings to the lesson. The teacher keeps trying to impose a formal structure in the traditional mould, and keeps resolutely to it, despite its apparent failure. The pupils play with the teacher, pretending at the game of learning, contriving fun and jokes out of it where they can, and devising their own amusement where not. The teacher's complete immersion in his own paradigm was shown at the end when he confided to me that 'that wasn't too bad. They worked quite well that lesson.' Most of the pupils, however, had played their way through the two periods. The two realities are sometimes wonderfully epitomised in the occasional double entendre, its catalytic qualities, ensuring, for the moment at least, the supremacy of the pupils' reality:- Teacher (during experiment demonstrating the expansion of liquids) - 'Unless you've got your nozzle right in, you might get it

cut off (i.e. the petrol supply), therefore leave room for expansion.' Kim and Amanda fall about in hysterical laughter.

In 'negotiation', teacher and pupils manage to arrive at a 'core' universe of meaning which has properties recognized by all parties to it. Perspectives, to some degree at least, lock into each other at certain points. In other areas of school life, as in the example above, teacher and pupils remain firmly within their own 'sub-universe of meaning'. The physical points of contact are mentally transformed into matter appropriate to the sub-universe.

Cultural lag and structural fault

Approaches to 'work' in school show a variety of perspectives. Teachers would say their aim is to accomplish learning, and that to learn, pupils have to work. Some pupils work hard, those with total commitment, very hard. The majority, however, at Lowfield had less straightforward attitudes to work. The teachers moved to meet these in various ways from the almost continuous urging and enticing to work that went on in Assembly, lesson, Speech Day, headmaster's office, reports etc., and the parading of ideal models to a variety of adaptations to pupils' own adaptations or recalcitrance. The extreme example of this, very pervasive at Lowfield, centred on 'survival'. Much activity, therefore, was a product of teacher striving and pupil recalcitrance - negotiating, bargaining, with teachers persuading, forcing or kidding pupils to work, doing most of it for them, chivvying them along, creating atmospheres

of obligation, with pupils passing the time, playing, working the system. Some teachers and pupils spent their whole time thus engaged, and this, therefore, was the measure of their work.

More 'hard work' was to be found among the examination forms, but it was a strange activity, at times difficult, tortuous and much disliked, not at all involving the ingredients of 'fulfilment' - opportunities for choice, decision, acceptance of responsibility, self-determination and growth. This 'work' was often the opposite of these, suppressing rather than encouraging them. There is a great deal of talk of work as a commodity, matched with notions of quantified capabilities. (Young, 1975).

Teachers compose imperatives like 'proper amounts', 'fitting into periods', 'finishing before the bell', 'what these kids can or can't do', 'the need to catch up', 'that's that subject done'. As Bernstein notes, 'Children and pupils are early socialized into this concept of knowledge as private property. They are encouraged to work as isolated individuals with their arms around their work.' (Bernstein, 1971).

An interesting yardstick on close personal meanings of work today is provided by Fox (1976). Much condensed, these are:-

- a) provides an organizing principle
- b) serves sociability needs
- c) sustains status and self-respect

- d) establishes personal identity
- e) provides a routine
- f) distracts from worry
- g) offers 'achievement'
- h) contributes to a cause.

For many pupils at Lowfield only b) and e) of this list would appear appropriate, with possibilities of c), d) and g) in 'fringe school activities like games, the official programme being actually counter-productive in respect of a), c), f) and g). This might only appear reprehensible if we regard work as the central life interest. But as Bell notes, 'For the modern, cosmopolitan man, culture has replaced both religion and work as a means of self-fulfilment, or as a justification...of life.' (Bell, 1976). The organization of life in the modern industrial society has brought about a heavy investment for the individual in the private sphere. (Berger et al, 1973). Thus the most meaningful activities to many of these pupils were those which made sense within their own culture, and which pertained to the 'private' sphere - 'childcare' to the retreatist 5L girls, 'social crafts', swimming and other sports to the intransigent 4L boys. But even for many of the conformist strivers, there was a 'distance' between them and their work, so that all, to varying degrees, support the contention that 'Man, once homo faber, and at the centre of work, is now animal laborans and at the periphery of work.' (Seligman, 1966).

This, of course, is just as true of teachers as I shall

demonstrate later. And if work is a kind of secondary 'going through the motions' for many teachers, with its compartmentalization, systematization, subservience to time, then it can hardly be anything different for the pupils. For when teachers try to convert the business, either for integrating or motivational reasons, into a more 'progressive' enterprise, it ceases to be work and becomes 'play' - either a familiar kind of adaptation to the work scene or a component more in keeping with the private sphere.

How far is the class factor evident here? The same group perspectives identified in Chapter 4 were apparent to some extent. When turning to future occupations, as well as subject-choice, it is the human face of work that concerns those from a working-class background - personal security to be sure, and the means for the enrichment of the private area ('good money', 'in the dry'), but also the desire to be with friends, the camaraderie, i.e. the good 'relations' among all concerned. The other perspective, less evident in this chapter, one suspects contrasts in its extra-personal criteria, its careerist, professional keynotes and its tendency toward total commitment and matching role with person. The first aims at securing the best possible conditions for toleration purposes and maximizing the adaptive techniques. 'Fulfilment' will be elsewhere. Society is not 'their' domain, but is run by and for others - those of the other perspective. (Willis, 1977). As with regard to subject-choice, so too with work

and future career, family perspectives are reinforced by the school, equally paradoxically against the apparent intent of the teachers. (Ashton and Field, 1976).

The majority of pupils at my school were from working-class backgrounds, and this chapter shows that influence which reinforces the influence of modern industrialism, among examination and non-examination forms alike. Pulled apart in some ways by, for example, the hierarchies of work which possibly channelled them along different routes into the occupational structure, their basic criteria in the experience of work were remarkably similar. Part of the answer lies in the roots of the working-class culture from which they come. The process of adaptation to work goes back many years, and the cultural forms it has given rise to have deep roots and are very pervasive. As Fox argues, 'Generations of the working-class, subjected to this pattern of work experience, have made a 'realistic' adaptation to it by relinquishing or by never bothering to take seriously aspirations towards intrinsic satisfaction'. (1976, p.24). Like the factory, school is not an area where they can 'make something of themselves'. (Ashton and Field, 1976). 'During this century, the working-classes have been systematically de-skilled...and with this...has come a contempt for work. (Carter, 1966). There is an 'experimental separation of the inner self from work' and it is 'the consensual human face of work as prepared for unofficially...in the school, much more than its intrinsic or technical nature, which confronts the individual as the

crucial dimension of his future.' (Willis, 1977). One of the keystones of this work culture is the aim to secure the best possible conditions for toleration purposes, while personal fulfilment will be found elsewhere.

Here, then, is a possible explanation for the emphasis on relationships. The cultural forms that envelop the pupil in his life outside school, among which he was reared from birth and through which he constructs his meanings of life and, particularly, certain generalized attitudes to work, are reinforced in school. This may not be the intention of teachers, but it is a class offering they are perceived as making and it is as a class offering that it is rejected. Those elements that are valued within their own culture are, however, highly esteemed.

P.Woods : Do you keep your work in a folder?

Pusser : Yeah, all them sort of pouffee things.

Folders, projects, exercises, writing, reading, homework, indeed all mental work as such, are 'pouffee things', not only not for the likes of them, but oppositional and threatening and, therefore, to be resisted. Whenever the full extent of their machismo is promised satisfaction, as in Games, they will perform wholeheartedly. There is dignity to be won in the gym or on the field; enemies to be resisted in the classroom. But where the agent of that enemy force, the teacher, accords with certain strands in their culture, as in the emphasis on social relationships and sheer indulgence in the delights of sociation, the gap

will be breached. The teacher-pupil relationship is not all conflict by any means. At times it rises to great 'heights' of togetherness, but, at least with these pupils, it is based not on the manifest role of the school, work, but something that is often seen as an oppositional force to work, in that it has no other purpose than the immediate production of pleasure. The official programme is not just middle-class. It is childish, kid's stuff. To these pupils, there are not many connections between school and work. School is for kids, almost a separate compartment of life, a glorified creche for adolescence. Work is for adults. (Carter, 1966).

This is part of a wider syndrome of scepticism about school. Not only is school work 'pouffee' but there is a great deal of hypocrisy about other aspects of school policy and organization which reinforces their feelings that it is not for them:-

Julie : It's so false! (Open Day) We know what it's like, but people who come, they don't show it how it is, they should see you just how you are!

Heather : And Sports Day, it's taken too seriously, they take it like the Olympics. If you can't run or throw, they don't want to know you.

Julie : The staff get more excited than the pupils. It's all right in the first year, but after that you get bored. People try and skive, don't come to House trials.

- Brenda : That was a real show that was! (Open Day)
- Shirley : It was like a doll's house.
- Brenda : Honestly, it really was.
- Caroline : It was really bad.
- Shirley : All signs going round, this way, that way...
- Brenda : Flowers everywhere...oh!
- P.Woods : Why was it 'really bad'?
- Caroline : We had to sit here typing for show!
- Shirley : I mean, it wasn't the usual Wednesday
afternoon. We all had to do special things.
- Caroline : And all the prefects...this was what made me
mad...had to usher people in and show them
around. And I had to sit in a cupboard and
read - I did! My name wasn't on the...Yeah,
it was - because I'd got this jumper on!

It should be said that within this broad, general trend there are many individual differences, encouraged by a certain amount of differentiation in the occupational world. There are related differences in commitment - for example, as one goes up the occupational hierarchy, more of one's 'self' is invested in the job. (Berger, 1973). There are differences among teachers in commitment, and vast differences between teachers and pupils. Among the pupils also, there are degrees of involvement, some thoroughly attuned to school, others totally opposed. This said, the general trend remains clearly evident. All this illustrates one of the biggest paradoxes about school, in that it is often held to be in the forefront of knowledge,

in its efforts to develop skills and abilities and to open minds, yet is one of the biggest victims of cultural lag in this society. Teachers go on preaching the virtues of the Protestant Ethic, with its emphasis on ambition, hard work and deferred gratification, but the structural parameters of society no longer make these viable propositions for most people. 'Work' has undergone a metamorphosis, little any longer involving the totality of the person. It is by and large a nagging necessity, to which parents and parents' parents have adapted over the years, developing new meanings which are filtered through to their children direct from their first-hand objective experience of work and participation in work cultures, which helps perpetuate 'the cycle of inequality'. (Fox, 1976). No amount of teacher advice and persuasion can scratch the surface of this massive influence. They instinctively know that, and thus their exhortations seem to have an unreal quality. This suits their own ambivalence for they, too, are subject to the same structural forces. Teachers' 'work' is not exempt from modernizing forces which have rendered it an intermixture of pedagogy, professionalism and survival. (See Chapters 9, 10 and 11). They are thus in the curious position of sponsoring an ideology they neither follow themselves nor is any longer appropriate for the structural situation of their charges. It persists because it is associated with the self-perpetuating practices and beliefs that have been mustered by the teacher in his defence against the exigencies of the job which themselves have become standardized. (Lortie, 1975; Rosenbaum, 1976).

The cultivation of a work ethic - that work is intrinsically satisfying and rewarding - is a useful strategy when they have to co-ordinate and control subordinate labour. As Anthony notes with regard to factory managers, when a disjunction is perceived between this view and reality, they conclude it is the content of the programme that is wrong, rather than their view of it, or that pupils are defective in their powers of appreciation. (Anthony, 1977, p.289).

Thus pupil 'work' (schoolwork) is not a straight forward matter of application to a task in hand, but the product of a series of adjustments to the exigencies of the moment, and these adjustments are strongly influenced by background cultural factors. The teacher, in turn, responding to the demands of professionalism and the needs dictated by his conditions of work (resources, space, numbers, etc.), continues to make the requirement of the pupil even more esoteric, in the sense that many pupils find it difficult to locate if comfortably in their world-view of things. Schoolwork is, therefore, unreal for many pupils and they duly transform it into something more meaningful - play or sociation. In this form they can live with it, even enjoy it. But work of the old fashioned order has lost its structural supports and its accomplishment, therefore will not be a result of a pure state of application, but a product of negotiation, bartering, adapting and manoeuvring. A cynical view might hold that that is not inappropriate training for adult life in the modern world. A more

optimistic line would be to set in hand ways and means of bridging the gap between intention and practice in more positive fashion, and that would have to take less account of 'ideal' notions of work, and more of the cultural supports that sustain the pupil which grow out of the conditions of real work actually experienced by his family and fellows.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HAVING A LAUGH

Q: What do you think about when you come through those gates in the morning?

A: Well, I think... 'ere we go again - another day for mucking about.'

It's all right when you're at school really, like when you can just talk to people, have a laugh.

It's the only place we have fun isn't it?

We aren't silly at home; not very often anyway. You act silly at school for a laugh.

The prominence in pupils' minds of 'institutional' elasticity and freedom and the development of their own social values are indications that their school life-worlds are far wider than an investigation based on official norms and criteria can reveal. Nor is its chief feature necessarily to be found in 'working'. Often this world seems composed of an aimless, pointless, disorganized chaos of activity, a childish 'mucking about' or causing trouble through sheer devilment, or 'not paying attention', or simply loafing about 'doing nothing'. However, it is not as aimless and disorganized as it appears. Its central feature is laughter. That is the means by which pupils - and teachers, as we shall see in Chapter 11 - displace the grimness, the sourness and hostility that impinges upon them, and make their school lives more palatable, even enjoyable. In this sense schooldays can well be the 'happiest days of one's life'. However, for the most part it is not a naturally intended consequence of the official

programme and policy, or youthful exuberance merely filling the spaces in between. Rather, it is a colonizing activity, a pleasant way of surviving, a means of infusing life, zest, interest and excitement into sometimes hostile and alien surroundings; and which emphasizes togetherness, camaradie, fortifies the group and provides identities within it.

I was alerted to it mainly by conversations with 5L, the senior 'non-examination' form in the school, many of whose pupils had run through the full gamut of adaptations ultimately to settle for a form of colonizing, with laughter as its chief expression, to form almost a little world of their own. As such, they can develop their own forms of laughter, but much is generated at the interface between their world and the official programme of the school.

Kate : I remember Mr. Gantry calling Tracy 'my pet goat'.

Tracy : Always in trouble, me and Kate.

Kate : Lazy, horrible lot, pests he used to call us.
Lazy.

Tracy : You ain't 'eard 'is new saying 'ave you? 'E says to Joanne Mackie, 'Don't sit there looking pretty, will you?' So Joanne says, 'One thing, I look a sight better than you.' (Loud shrieks of laughter and suckings in of breath from girls).

Kate : We used to play 'im up in the third year just so's he'd give us a lecture and we wouldn't have to do no work.

Tracy : 'Orrible, miserable lot', he used to say. 'Lazy'.

- Kate : Yeah, we used to laugh at 'im.
- Tracy : What about when 'e made us go outside and made us march back in properly.
- Kate : What about when me and you fell out and I threw your book across the classroom and 'e sent me down to Miss Judge.
- Dianne : What about when Mr. Bridge stood just outside the door.
- Tracy : Dianne fell off a chair first and as she went to get up she got 'old of me skirt, she was 'aving a muck about and there was I in me petticoat, me skirt came down round me ankles and Mr. Bridge came in. (Great screams of laughter from girls). He'd been standing outside the door.
- Kate : 'E told her she'd get suspended.
- Tracy : He 'ad me mum up to the school, telling her what a horrible child I was.
- Kate : 'Nobody will marry you', said Miss Judge.
- Tracy : Oh yeah, Miss Judge sits there'n, 'Nobody will want to marry you, Jones', she said. I said, 'Well, you ain't married anyway.' (Shrieks of laughter from girls).

Types of School Laughter

Laughter can be an instrument of policy, its aim to forge better relationships and to create an atmosphere judged to be conducive to the achievement of the aims of the school. Laughter can also be a reaction against authority and

routine, a socially divisive and disturbing element made in the interests of the preservation of one group and the destruction of the other. Both of these are chiefly teacher-initiated. We can find both, of course, in the same school. In Chapter 5, I noted the importance pupils of all abilities attached to teachers being able to share a joke and have a laugh with them. During such incidents, teacher and pupil were seen to transcend the institution and become more 'human'. This seems apparent in remarks about teachers like 'He's more natural' and 'He's more like your friend than a teacher'. Conversely, a prominent feature of teachers disliked were their lack of fun and propensity to laughter (e.g. 'He's always moaning'). I am not concerned here with the first type of teacher-initiated laughter since my focus is on the pupils. Among them, I discerned two broad types of laughter which I term 'natural' and 'institutionalized' laughter.

Natural Laughter

Laughing seems a natural function. The young especially like to laugh, so we can assume there will be a certain amount seeking to push through the institutionalized constraints to the surface whatever the character of the institution. However, there was plenty of evidence that much school laughter had its own peculiar characteristics. The pupils themselves distinguished readily between 'natural' and 'institutionalized' laughter.

Sandy : It's different when we're outside, isn't it?

When you're mixing with other people that are

- older than what you are, can't act stupid then.
- P.Woods : You act with a ladylike deportment do you?
- Tracy : Eh?
- Gill : Well, we have a laugh when we go out.
- Sandy : I mean we don't muck about like we do in school.
- Gill : No, we don't stand there throwing bottles and plimsolls about.
- Sandy : We have a good laugh when we go out anyway.
- P.Woods : What, and still be sort of 'ladylike'?
- Sandy : Yeah, and still have a good laugh. When we are out of school uniform it's a lot different.
- Gill : I don't know, when you go out you sort of act your age and I don't know.
- Sandy : We aren't silly at home, not very often anyway. You act silly at school for a laugh.
- Gill : Yeah, not all the time, but we muck about.

Many of the examples that appear in my notes I would interpret as natural laughter. Much of the laughing and joking with teachers (as opposed to against teachers) and between groups of friends I would place in this category. The content of this type of laughter is often extra-institutional. Girls, for example, make capital out of their evening social engagements. I would also include as natural, certain high-spirited activities which occur and never come to the attention of staff. During my stay at the school, two that came to my attention were 'mass rapes' and 'F.P's'. 'Mass rapes' were calculated systematized 'assaults' on certain girls by one group of

boys. 'F.P.'s' were 'funny positions' simply involving boys falling on top of each other, the aim seeming to be to do this in as bizarre a situation or in as massive a pile as possible. No doubt the fact that such activities are contrary to official norms adds extra piquancy to the enjoyment, but I feel that this type of laughter owes more to the natural exuberance of youth than to any institutional factor beyond the part it plays in bringing them together. Many of these activities might be conceptualized as 'side involvements' in that they are peripheral to the main official activity of the school and do not impinge on it. (Goffman, 1961). The same is true of some other laughs dependent on the pupils' own interaction such as those which involve socialization into a subculture.

Institutionalized Laughter I - Mucking About

Institutionalized laughter takes two main forms:-

- 1) 'mucking about', a kind of seemingly aimless behaviour often labelled by teachers as 'silly' or 'childish' and
- 2) subversive laughter, aimed deliberately or not at undermining the authority structure of the school or the status of a particular teacher. Both forms of laughter seem to vary among pupils in proportion to their commitment to school.

Examination pupils, generally, were less bored and made less mention of having a laugh than non-examination pupils. This was confirmed by my observations. Examination pupils were more circumspectly behaved and officially orientated.

Non-examination pupils seemed to exercise their minds mainly in devising their own forms of amusement, thus transforming the reality of the school. Laughter is an excellent vehicle for this. Goffman observed that joking is a way in which the individual makes a plea for disqualifying some of the expressive features of the situation as a source of definition of himself; and to participate with a group of one's similars in this kind of activity can lend strength to the show of role distance and to one's willingness to express it. (Goffman, 1961). This, incidentally, illustrates the caution we must exercise in interpreting positive answers to asking children if they like school. Many of them might say, 'Yes', but only having transformed the reality of it.

In their conversations with me, 5L talked to me about their life at school. Analysing these recorded discussions, there was a remarkable contrast between on the one hand a set of factors which could be subsumed under 'boredom' and, on the other, relating to fun and laughter. The former made for dour, grim recounting while we talked within the official definition of the school. Many regretted not having been allowed to take examinations. Some had lost out by choices in the third year. The 'work' they were doing, and had been doing since the beginning of the fourth year, was too 'boring', too 'simple'; they were simply repeating work; or did 'useless', 'meaningless' work or 'nothing'; lessons were not 'helping for the future'; they were 'ignored', 'forgotten about', 'practised upon',

'made use of'; some teachers agreed with them, others 'didn't care', 'picked on them', 'took it out of them'.

The following examples are given to demonstrate how ingrained this boredom is within these pupils.

Example 1

- P.Woods : Do you get anything out of school subjects?
- George : No, not very helpful I don't find them, just boring.
- Len : Some of them interest yer.
- Harry : Everybody likes an easy time, don't they?
Like our English group now, it's mad ain't it?
He tells you the answers before you ever do anything. Says 'Oh, well, I'll write it up on the blackboard first and then I'll copy it out!' Huh! Rubbish!
- Len : It's like Mr. Brown, you don't learn nothing on that, you just copy off the board.
- Harry : Blackboards and blackboards of writing, it's just meaningless. You write it down. Can you tell me what we done last week?
- George : Done nothing.
- Len : I wasn't here last week.
- P.Woods : What use do you make of this writing? Do you ever read it again? Are you ever tested on it?
- Len : No.
- Harry : We haven't 'ad an exam in two years, it's pointless.

Example 2

- Kim : I can do it, I just don't like it, it's too boring. The maps we are doing now are so simple really.
- Christine : I've not learnt anything these past two years. The English we're doing is exactly the same as my sister's doing in the first year, and the Maths work, she's doing 'arder work than what I'm doing.
- Kim : What I'm doing is fractions, but 'alf of this work is only second form stuff. I just sit around doing nothing, either because it's too easy or because I'm not bothered about it.
- Christine : See, we're not learning anything. We've done it all before. I wish they'd give us some work, some proper work to do. It's so boring; we have two lessons with Mrs. Nelson, that's interesting because she talks to us about life and things like that. Nobody plays about there because it's interesting. In Chemistry the boys sit around and throw things about.

Example 3

- Sally : I'm repeating work. It's making me sick because I can remember doing it before and it was quite exciting then, but now we're painting and washing up and everything else.

- Susan : ...ever so easy... (all talking at once in agreement).
- P.Woods : Isn't there anything you enjoy doing?
- Joanne : Art. And that's about all - for a laugh.

Example 4

- John : There's nothing to do here. There's a long dinner hour, not that we mind that but us being fifth years, we can't have a room to ourselves where we can talk. If you go in the cloakroom you might be suspected of stealing if something goes wrong, but if we had us own room we could go in there and talk, but we're all outside, bored stiff. There's no activity to do. It really does depress you. We ain't got nothing to do. You're just waiting for the next lesson and when it comes, you're bored stiff.

Example 5

- P.Woods : Looking back on school, what do you think you're going to remember about it most?
- Paul : Boredom, of all the lessons and that. Same thing day after day. I like primary school better. There were more things to do and I seemed to get on better there.

Example 6

Alan : When they had Speech Day, everyone started ripping off these bits of foam under their chairs and started throwing them about. Suddenly I noticed a line of teachers at the door taking names, everyone in the hall, you know, spaced out, sort of Gestapo, spaced out standing up for the interrogation... 'Did you throw?' ... 'Were you in?' ... some people got the cane, but it was so boring, it weren't true Speech Days. If you're sat there for a whole afternoon with nothing to do you do get bored, don't you?

Example 7

Simon : It's not a bad school really, you know. I don't mind it you know, but... coming every day, doing the same old thing one day after the other, same lessons, you know, gets a bit sickening. You can't wait until the end of the week or the end of the day, you know, when you get here.

P.Woods : Do you find the work difficult?

Simon : No, it's not difficult, it's boring. You just sit there with a whole lot of work to do.

P.Woods : What do you do, say in English?

Simon : Wednesdays, teacher reads to you which you nearly fall off to sleep. I do anyway. You get so bored with it, you know.

P.Woods : What else do you do?

Simon : It's hard to think. I remember once I got so bored I did fall off to sleep in English.

Yeah, so bored with it.

Example 8

From field notes March 5th, 1975.

Art - Periods 1 and 2 - 4th form

Carol, Janice and Susan seem lost for anything to do.

'Have you any jobs, Sir?' The three of them shimmy idly over.

Teacher : How am I going to find jobs for you three for all of next term? (Teacher sets them arranging magazines in a file, the three exchange looks of resignation).

Teacher tells me they're not interested in Art. They came to him for negative reasons. He sees some of them three times a week, twice for half days. There are four more terms to go yet.

A considerable amount of 'mucking about' was mentioned in association with expressions of boredom, itself often connected with routine, ritual and regulations. Thus Speech Days, Assemblies and other forms of ritual which the vast majority of pupils I spoke to described as 'boring', 'useless', 'meaningless', 'a waste of time', taxed their ingenuity in remaining sane. I witnessed many Assemblies.

On the surface they seemed rigid, militaristic, well-drilled affairs. Pupils filed in by form, were inspected for uniform as they passed through the door, and lined up in serried ranks. Teachers ordered them, squaring off rough corners, tidying up lines, filling up spaces. They stood amongst them at strategic points while those not on 'duty' mounted the platform. There followed, usually, a talk, a hymn, prayers then announcements. The beginning and end were monopolized by the band. For most of the pupils I spoke to in the senior school, it was twenty minutes of standing boredom. Here are some typical reactions:-

'Assemblies are a waste of time. For religious people they're O.K., it's a good morning's start, but there aren't many religious people in the school. You're all in there together. It's a great temptation to kick somebody's legs and make them fall down just for a laugh, just temptation to trouble.'

'No, we don't listen in Assembly. We just muck about. Sing to drown everyone else and that.'

'Useless, rubbish.'

'The boys keep tickling yer...All mucking about... boys pulling your hair and that.'

'Waste of time I reckon, 'cos while you're standing there you might as well have an extra ten minutes on your lessons. All you do is sing a song and say a prayer and that's it, you're out again.'

You could do that any time, couldn't you, at home?'

Among the pupil Assembly activities that I observed were the mutilating of hymn books, whispering messages along the row, general scuffling, teasing the nearest teacher, communicating by coughs, making faces at the teachers on the stage. The hymns seemed to be quite an exciting affair. Among the competitions I witnessed were trying to be the last one to finish a verse, getting a word in in the middle of a pause, - (The most amusing one I heard was a cacophony of 'harks' in the pauses between the lines in 'Hark, the Herald Angels Sing') - trying to drown the senior mistress, inventing new words for the hymn as you go along, mutilating your hymn books some more.

Pupil rules: The backdrop to subversive laughter

Pupils not only make their own amusement during Assemblies, they have their own sense of order determined by status amongst themselves. If this is disturbed by teachers there is great annoyance.

'Look, as far as I can remember, ever since the first year the 5L used to stand at the back didn't they Frankie? Back at the left hand side, so you work your way up the school and you get there and you got to move and then we get moved (all talk heatedly at once). Why should we suddenly get moved? All the other fifth years have been back there.'

P.Woods : I don't follow.

'Well you ought to be able to find your own position, walk straight up at the back but you have to be lined up, lined in half way down, form by form...'

Similarly, if their 'laughs' are seriously curtailed by an over zealous member of staff, they might bear him particular resentment since he is forcing them back into boredom. It is a kind of second order annoyance. They have accepted the boredom and have invented certain ways of coping with it - 'secondary adjustments' - the ways the individual stands apart from the role and the self, taken for granted for him by the institution and by which he 'makes out', 'gets by', 'plays the system', and so on. (Goffman, 1961). The maintenance of social order in the school depends on staff not seeing, ignoring, or accepting this. They are, in fact, 'hidden norms'. Behind the apparently sterile officially ordered facade, there is operating another system developed by the pupils through time which transgresses the general rules of the institution without appearing to do so. It is 'concealed deviance' from an official point of view. But, from a pupil's point of view, time, tradition, lack of detection and spiritual and physical necessity have legitimated such activity. Studies of deviance usually take an official line whether it is regarded as qualitative activity, one that is so labelled, or one phenomenologically conceived, but pupils, commonly disregarded because they have less power, also have their notions of deviance. Often this is confused with the

official line which pupils are wont to present to pseudo-official interviewers, which then they have mistakenly been perceived to have internalized. The activity of which I speak here might be regarded as yet another part of the so-called hidden curriculum, similar in essence to the unofficial strategies employed by pupils to meet official criteria for, usually, certification. Here, however, their intent is survival and sanity.

Pupils then have their own rules. The usual interpretation of rituals, and that their chief function is to reinforce social order, is, of course, uni-dimensional. It assumes a passive assembly who receive the ordering and an active staff who impose it. I am saying that, despite first appearances, everybody is active, but in different milieux. The pupils have their own rules. Foster has noticed this in another educational setting, namely that involving urban lower-class black children in the United States. (Foster, 1974). He suggests that one of the reasons why the education of such children is not working is that urban educators have been playing the game of teaching and learning by the wrong rules.

'The formal organizational rules of the urban teachers and administrators are not working. The rules actually running the schools are the informal rules set by the students which evolve from lower-class urban black male street corner behaviour and life style.'

(Foster, 1974, p.179)

However, there was nothing in my study to suggest anything remotely like 'street corner behaviour'. This was a rural area and there were no signs of any integrated behaviour as in an inner city, though there are, undoubtedly, class differences between pupils and teachers and this is connected with the development of group perspectives. The in-group, of course, does not need laughs as much as the out-group. For the latter, therefore, there are structural connotations, but their behaviour, unlike Foster's 'street corner behaviour', is much more institutionally produced. It is a response to circumstances and those circumstances shape and condition the response.

How do pupil rules work during lessons? In these micro units individuals have more influence and the situation has a more fluid penumbra. Thus pupil norms can vary from teacher to teacher and in accordance with their own composition. (Furlong, 1977). I think it is true to say, however, that there is a pupil-institutional core norm which all new teachers to a school have to discover and adjust to. Some of them never succeed and spend their time and energy in misguidedly trying to establish official rules. This infraction of pupil rules and norms can promote 'heavy' conflict displayed in anger.

Lorraine : We 'ad a lady teacher and she picked on Angela and we all sort of went against 'er. We were shouting at her, moaning at her, telling her why she was 'itting Angela for nothing. You know she was 'itting Angela,

and we just turned round, chucked our pencils all over the place, said, 'Right, we're not doing no more work', and we sat there, didn't we?

Yvonne : Yeah. We all slammed our pencils down and just sat there.

Here is another group of girls' account of the same incident:-

Lisa : Some teachers say we're uncontrollable, like Miss Leacock.

Others : You can't talk to her...No, you can't...

Tracy to Lisa : When she 'it you, it weren't even you, were it?

Lisa : No, she 'it me for nothing.

Beryl : They all started shouting at 'er and she said, 'Sorry'.

Lisa : She said, 'I'm ever so sorry'.

Tracy : Someone said, 'you didn't 'ave to 'it 'er'. She went off her rocker, so she grabbed 'old of Lisa, slapped her face and said, 'You'll come down to the (senior mistress)', got to the door and there was a riot.

This teacher told me that she never understood these girls. As a new teacher she had tried to impose an inflexible static order on her classes, 'starting as she meant to carry on' in the folk wisdom of the trade. But this could be dangerous practice. We must distinguish between school

norms, teacher-class norms and teacher-individual norms. As pupil and school come to terms with each other, so does each teacher and class and each teacher and individuals in each class. This is why starting teachers are in such a difficult position. They don't know the school norms and are often misled by seasoned teachers instructing them in their own class and individual norms. Their initial approach, therefore, could either be firm, and possibly misplaced, or tentative, in which case in repressive schools the sponge rubber behaviour of the pupils, traditionally suppressed, will naturally spring back at them, pupils taking what advantage of the negotiation they can.

Another illustration of the consequences of infraction of pupil rules came during a discussion about pupil antics I'd observed during certain lessons (such as walking over desks, swinging from beams, playing tape recorders, soft and loud, and playing 'find it' with the teacher, connecting Bunsen burners to water taps and directing fine jets to the ceiling, leaving the room and returning by various routes, etc., etc.). Invariably, they did these things just 'for a laugh', but occasionally to annoy a teacher.

'...say if he's taken a pack of cards off someone, say, and we're just trying to get our own back to try and annoy him - we'd do everything we could think of to annoy him.'

Much of this reaction takes the form of subversive laughter

which I discuss below.

Aided Colonization: The Avoidance of Subversive Laughter

As noted in Chapter 2, there was every indication that, at Lowfield at least, pupil norms and rules were taken into account. What might have been a thoroughly anti-school group were given assistance in colonizing and, in some ways, encouraged in the formation of a 'culture' which in ethos is pro-school by the staff. An interesting case in illustration of this is 'the smoking game'. There was a school rule against smoking, supposedly strict, but not explicitly against the possession of cigarettes. Many in the upper school were compulsive smokers. They must have their cigarettes, so they must smoke secretly. A club formed behind the swimming pool, but that was highly dangerous because of the presence of oil, so the area was put out of bounds. This was strictly enforced. The club reconvened behind the potting shed, another formed on the far side of the playing fields and these were disregarded. Clearly, it was more important to the staff that pupils should not blow themselves up than that they should not smoke. But they also realise that the smoking game is, in fact, one they cannot win, and that attempts at strict enforcement will only lead to unproductive trouble. 'There goes Michael for a smoke,' said one teacher to me during a lesson. 'What can you do?' - said with a humane grin rather than a tone of despair. I witnessed another teacher having an elaborate game with the boys in one class focussed on the detection of cigarettes. 'Come on, Dogsboddy, where are they? I know you've got some,' and searching a boy's

clothing amidst jocular protests, finding some and confiscating them in mock triumph, only to return them with an indulgent grin at the end of the lesson. Pupils played the smoking game in my presence, teasing each other about the possession of cigarettes, threatening to light up in my presence and so forth.

'Give us a fag, Scruff.'

'I don't smoke.'

'What are these then? (fumbling in his pockets). Do you want a light?'

I took this to mean that I was entering into the same kind of tacit conspiracy with them as some teachers were, in recognition of their own norms and rules. Rule infraction is good substance for a laugh, especially if those associated with official rule-making implicitly join in. In this sense pupils and teachers occasionally transcend the institution and find common cause in a common humanity. In this respect teachers, as law enforcers, are acting in a similar way to Bittner's skid-row police. (Bittner, 1967). They do not employ a strict interpretation of the rules, rather basing their discretion on 'a richly particularized knowledge of people and places'. They recognise that the law can be unjust. They often 'play by ear', using their own rules. We might regard this kind of teacher-pupil interaction as 'reciprocal indulgence' following Braroe's concept of reciprocal exploitation. (Braroe, 1973). Children are refused the privilege of playing adult roles (teachers are allowed to smoke, wear jewellery; they have freedom of movement, speech, etc.), therefore children must

define the self along defensible lines, but in a way to permit validation of this self by teachers. Hence, for example, they smoke in secret. To some teachers, pupils are childish, irresponsible and stupid. The pupils, because they can bend the rules so easily and trick teachers, see themselves as taking the advantage. This suggests that bad feeling in a pupil might be caused more by teacher rejection of self as presented by the pupil rather than because of the specific instance. In other words, the many deep-felt complaints from certain pupils about being 'picked on' may not have anything to do with the actual justice of the matter, but rest in the teacher's denial of the pupil's desired presentation of self. This is a delicate matter requiring keen teacher perception. Pupils offer an image of self consonant with a consensual definition of the situation supporting a social structure which includes the superordination of teachers over pupils. If this image of self is not recognised or accepted, then the consensus may fail.

School is 'not so bad', therefore, for many pupils so long as they can 'have a laugh', primarily to relieve the boredom of the official programme. The lesson for teachers would appear to be that, if they cannot make the programme more interesting to these pupils, they must take into account their need for creating their own interest to enable them to get through the day.

Teacher Types: Laughter Initiators

This does, however, raise the question, considering classroom

laughs, of wide differences among them depending on the teacher. The pupils in 5L did have a few likes - like 4L - mainly de-institutionalizing activities like community service or social studies, 'when we go on trips and that', but mostly the official programme was dead for them. They seemed to see teachers in four categories:-

1. Those that keep you working.
2. Those you can laugh and joke with.
3. Those you can work and have a laugh with.
4. Those that just don't bother.

Those in Category 3 appear to be showing most awareness. In Bittner's terms they are using their knowledge of the pupils to mediate the school policy. Those in Category 1 are seeking to impose it more literally. The difference is brought out in the following conversation.

Jane : Sometimes you can hear him shouting in the other room. He won't laugh, you see. They try to get him to laugh. They do these stupid things, they just want...If he'd laugh, things'd be alright. He won't, you see.

Anne : Oh, yeah, they'd do anything to try to make him laugh. He puts them in the report book and everything. They don't care.

Deirdre : Every lesson somebody is going down for it.

Jane : Yeah.

Deirdre : He put one girl in twice in one day. They do it on purpose. If he was to be more friendly with them like Mr. Lennox is 'cos he'll have a

laugh with you.

Jane : You see, he won't smile and have a laugh with you like Mr. Lonnex will.

Deirdre : 'Cos we can have a joke with him, can't we?

Jane : Yeah, and we do work as well, but in there they play about and don't do any work.

Here the 'authoritarian' teacher intent solely on 'working' gets his come-uppance directly. A more 'successful' (in his own terms) authoritarian teacher usually succeeds in displacing it towards the Category 2 type teacher. Let us examine this more closely. The teacher whom you can both work and laugh with is a respected person who knows his job, can keep control, teaches them something sometimes, but, above all, retains his human qualities in the classroom. His perception of teacher role does not require of him any different behaviour pattern than that of human being role. He has no problems of role distance and correctly perceives the pupils desired presentation of self through the constraining and de-humanizing institutionalized morass. The authoritarian teacher frequently adopts a different role from choice.

Kathleen : What about when we 'ad Mr. Bullet? He made us stand up straight when we walked in the classroom.

Deirdre : Like being in the army, that was.

Kathleen : He made us march out, if anyone spoke he made us write about three essays out.

Sally : There was a different side to him though,

'cos me and Tracy used to go in his room at break times - he was ever so nice - didn't have to march in then, just sit on desks and chat to him. He was ever so nice.

This reminds us, as Burns noted, of the discreteness of status positions and the schizophrenic nature of our society. (Burns, 1953). I also perceived a marked change in some teachers between classroom and staffroom or between on-duty and off-duty. This suggests that many teachers' classroom attitudes are open to change. However, such is the nature of secondary school teaching today that control is valued above transmission. In other words, the authoritarian teacher enjoys high esteem because of his ability to perform the custodial function while others struggle in varying degrees. This is usually taken to be because of either their own deficiencies or the evil and difficult nature of the children. No doubt some teachers have more 'trouble' than others. It would be foolish to deny that they affected the situation and this would be particularly true of 'weak' or 'wet' teachers. But it is part of the thesis here presented that these difficulties, which largely take the form of the pupils 'having a laugh', originate from the boredom they experience from the total institution. It needs humanizing, but the authoritarian works in the other direction in the service of the institution. There are no laughs in his sessions. If they are a bore, they would need to take and make more laughs elsewhere, wherever they could.

Institutional Laughter II: Subversive Laughter

Thus, having a laugh can come to assume a political nature. Reaction against authority can be stirred by the authoritarian teacher, possibly in reaction to a laugh against boredom and invariably fulfilled on the weak. When pupils get at the teacher directly by, for example, putting pins on his chair, making strange noises, sitting on whoopee cushions, letting off stink bombs, ventriloquising nicknames and playing other sorts of games deliberately to annoy, they are seizing opportunities to get at the stereotypical teacher rather than that teacher personally. Certainly they will exploit what personality idiosyncracies they can, but they are subsidiary to the major sociological factor. There are several forms of subversive laughter. One of the most common is 'subversive ironies'. (Goffman, 1961). Among school children, one form of this is name calling. Attaching nicknames to staff in depiction of character forms a status bridge which, by displacing it in humour, belittles it. Thus the headmaster and his deputy were known by some as 'Dick Dastardly and Side-kick' and the senior mistress as 'Nellie' or 'Flossie'. Unfortunate facial characteristics or behavioural habits or postures were seized on with alacrity and teachers rapidly transformed from Mr. or Miss So-and-so or 'Sir' to 'Deputy Dawg', 'Captain Pugwash', 'Cheetah', 'Fruitie', 'Beefy', etc. From this it is a short step to having them engage in all sorts of unlikely activity - usually illicit sexual activity. Numerous jingles, poems and anecdotes decorated the pupils' 'quarters'. Interestingly, sexual prowess and parts seemed to conform to the staff hierarchy. Much of this is closed

humour, that is to say it is used only within, from one's own culture or to oneself for the purposes of making the enemy appear ludicrous and boosting one's own status and self-esteem. Many behind the hand sniggers occur in coercive teaching situations. There is a more open technique which has the effect of making the enemy appear ludicrous in his own eyes as well as everybody else's. This would include shouting out the teacher's nickname, firing missiles at him and arranging booby-traps.

Another form is 'confrontational laughter'. On one occasion, one girl, unaware of the senior mistress' presence, shouted for the television set to be turned up because 'I can't hear the bloody thing.' This immediate confrontation of cultures from which the senior mistress felt obliged to retreat produced much laughter, as did another occasion when a girl, in anger, told the senior mistress 'to get stuffed'. Both these incidents show the pupils' culture impacting against the teacher's culture to the detriment of the latter. It also illustrates the important role of vulgar language, which, here, helps the pupils to sustain their own definition of the situation and blocks a construction of the 'official' one. Such occasions provide superb and dynamic material for laughs in the countless retelling of the incidents which will take place. The relating of them to me was yet another one of these occasions for laughter.

The authoritarian teacher, jealous of his status and sensitive to assaults on it, often tries to detect or

anticipate subversive ironies. However, they are not easily detectable and he may pick on a form of natural everyday laughter by mistake.

Wendy : Remember when we were discussing...(All: Oh, yeah! Much laughter).

Sharon : That was in the third year. He went off his rocker at us, didn't he?

Wendy : What was it? I know, we were talking about Christmas pudding and my Mum said me Nan's knickers caught fire (great laughter).

Sharon : I remember, Wendy...it weren't very...

Wendy : We were both sat in the front desk, chatting away...

Sharon : He went barmy. I told him he shouldn't be really listening (general laughter).

Here, a teacher has invaded a private area and earned a rebuke accompanied by laughter which could have done nothing for his self-esteem. Subversive ironies in number could be regarded as 'gallows humour' as mentioned above, a response to an atmosphere of tension and unease wherein people seek an intellectual and emotional escape from disturbing realities. (Obrdlik, 1942). Gallows humour can become a means of social control in boosting the morale of the victim and, at the same time, undermining that of the oppressors.

'He who has had no opportunity, as a participant observer, to feel on his own skin as it were the beneficent influence of the gallows humour upon the mentality and emotions of people in invaded

countries can hardly have an adequate idea of the importance of the social function exercised by this type of humour.'

(Obrdlik, 1942, p.715)

I would not wish to make many comparisons between schools and countries downtrodden by the boot of the invader, but the social function of some of the humour, at least, is similar.

'Gallows humour is a reliable index of the morale of the oppressed, whereas the reaction to it on the part of the oppressors tells a long story about the actual strength of the dictators: if they can afford to ignore it, they are strong; if they react wildly with anger, striking their victims with severe reprisals and punishment, they are not sure of themselves, no matter how much they display their might on the surface.'

(Ibid, p.716)

There is another form of subversive laughter which I would call symbolic rebellion. Some people make a career of open resistance, in their terms 'playing teachers up'. As above with gallows humour, success depends on response.

George : Jones 'e isn't worth playing up because he don't do nothing.

Alan : He don't like me, he picks on me. The other day in activities we were all sitting around the table playing dominoes and he came over and clouted me. The others were doing the same.

George : Jones just goes a bit red. It's not worth the effort of playing 'im up unless you're going to get a response. Mr. Cook goes livid.

P.Woods : Do you plan what to do in advance?

Pete : We don't often plan. We sometimes go in late. That always gets their goat. Mr. Diamond gets the chin, he knows all the big words. He called George a 'churl'. We just laugh at him.

Symbolic rebellion can also take the form of destruction of school property. Thus two glasshouses, which it had taken one class of non-examination boys a full term to repair and make functional, were destroyed by the same boys in the space of five minutes only a few weeks after completion of the task.

Another example that occurred during my stay was the blazer-ripping incident. Of all the symbols of school authority and their own oppression, none is more detested by the pupils, generally speaking, than school uniform. It is precisely because it is so closely associated with school norms and teacher authority that enforcement and conformity is pursued with vigour. After years of inspections and remonstrations about their clothing, a tradition had developed among boys who were leaving that others would tear his blazer literally to shreds during the last week of term. My stay at the school encompassed the departure of one group of boys marked by blazer-rippings which, in spite of the fact that they were done so near the end of the pupils' concerned school career, precipitated a teacher-pupil crisis. One boy's blazer was ripped to shreds early in the week of departure. He was seen on his way home by a member of staff and referred to the headmaster. A campaign was

then launched for the detection of those responsible, which involved the whole form being detained for several periods of their free time, much vigorous interrogation and, ultimately, the caning of the offenders. It was a heated topic among both staff and pupils. The most quoted factor lying behind teachers' anger that I heard was connected with their 'in loco parentis' role. They felt responsible for both person and property of the pupil. Thus one teacher thought the mother of the boy concerned deserved compensation for the destruction of the article. But the mother had sent a letter saying she had no objection and telling the teachers to forget the incident. However, by this time there was more at stake and the professional zeal with which the investigation was conducted is evidence to the extent to which teachers were sensitive to the symbolic assault on their authority. To the pupils, the teachers' case seemed unreasonable, unfair and altogether out of proportion to the event.

'What's one blazer? It wasn't all that good, anyway.'

'They'd been writing all over blazers, writing their names on them. It's a traditional activity at the end of yer school days.'

'They all get ripped on the last day, anyway. You can't do much about it. Last day they all come round and cut chunks out of your hair, tie up your hair, half cut up your blazer and then messing about all the way home, sticking scarves out of the window and things like that, but they can't do much

about that because you've left.'

'On our bus, when the last lot left, there was Maths books, all sorts of books going out of the window and that gets their hair up, because all the people round about complain. Bits of paper there were everywhere.'

Once leavers are clear of the school they can do what they like, but this blazer-ripping incident, occurring at the beginning of the week in which pupils left, impinged too much on school time and became, therefore, in the teachers' view not only a violation of school rules and norms and their authority but also an overstepping of the bounds of discretion most of them usually employed. Again, a situation redolent with laughter turned into heavy conflict, characterized by anger.

'Having a laugh' is not always enjoyable by any means. As a cure for painful experiences it is only partly efficacious. When it comes to leaving school, many, particularly the girls, may feel sad, even cry, forgetting the bad times, remembering the laughs, even summoning affection for those who have hurt them the most, possibly because the treatment led to particularly memorable laughter-making devices. Thus might authoritarian teachers be given more cause for self congratulation. But, in the existential situation of the classroom, the laughter might have arisen from constraining situations in response to boredom or in reaction to oppressive authority. Many teachers understand this and

this understanding will be reflected in their better personal relationships with the pupils. But the question of accounting for the boredom in its total and blanketing effect on some pupils is a much broader one involving structural and historical factors. There are also questions unanswered about the nature of the laughter and its incidence among the pupils. For example, to what extent is it a response or reaction to the dominant culture and/or how far is it an expression of their own culture? These are matters requiring further investigation. Neither must psychological aspects be forgotten, for example, laughter as tension release. This raises interesting questions about 'cards'. Among the pupils are particularly severe 'nut-cases'. Perceived manifestly as a great trial by teachers they may, in fact, be extremely functional for a school in providing foci for tension release among whole groups of pupils. I shall take this up later in Chapter 11, in relation to teacher humour.

Pupils have their own norms, rules and values and their school lives are well structured by them in ways not immediately apparent and not always based on official criteria. In their lives, laughter has a central place, either as a natural product or as a life-saving response to the exigencies of the institution - boredom, ritual, routine, regulations, oppressive authority. Inasmuch as the latter predominate in a school, the laughter will not be consensual contributing to control, but obstructive, subversive and rebellious, contributing to conflict.

NOTE: CHAPTER 7Previous work on Laughter

Sociological work on humour and laughter might be seen as leaning towards either of two models, conflict or control. (Barron, 1950). Among the latter which focus on the way laughter mellows the abrasive qualities of institutions, joking relationships between teachers and pupils have been explored by Walker and Goodson, (1977). They show that joking is heavily situated, that it might not be appreciated by an outsider unfamiliar with the history and general context of the relationships under observation. This in itself suggests there might be more humour in schools than meets the eye. Using conversations with teachers as leads and as illustrations, Walker and his colleague suggest various ways in which joking might facilitate the teachers' task; mainly it has to do with establishing personal relationships with students, but they can also 'mark areas of vulnerability in the frame'. (Bernstein, 1971).

However, as observers they were mostly impressed by the way 'jokes short circuit social situations in a way that allows them to become personal and unique. Joking is one way in which social structures are made human.' Fifty years ago, Hayworth was advancing a theory that laughter was originally a vocal signal to other members of the group that they might relax with safety. (1928). A similar point is made by Emerson with regard to hospitals when she talks of joking being the negotiation of a private agreement to suspend a general guideline of the institutional setting, bargaining to make unofficial arrangements about taboo topics. (1969).

Other features of bureaucratization have been seen to be assailed by humour. Coser, for example, found that 'negative democratization' encourages a colleague type of relationship between nurses and doctors rather than a service one - 'hence the banter and joking which help further to cancel out status differences and the relative frequency of interaction.' (Coser, 1958) Anthropologists have noted how among primitive societies joking seems to maintain equilibrium among persons and groups who, because of their relative positions and social ties, might otherwise feel antagonism toward each other and threaten the disruption of the society. (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952). This function is claimed to have been identified in a London department store. (Bradney, 1957).

On the conflict side, Coser elsewhere suggests three main social functions of laughter among hospital inmates - the alleviation of boredom, elevation of status and the counter-action of ritual and routinization with expression of individuality. (Coser, 1959). Freud remarked that 'what is fine about humour is the ego's victorious assertion of its own invulnerability.' (Freud, 1950). Obrdlik made a similar point on a nationwide scale in his study of 'gallows humour', which he claims arises in difficult and dangerous situations and which might be taken as an index of strength or morale on the part of oppressed peoples; it could have a disintegrating effect on those toward whom it is directed. (Obrdlik, 1942). In these situations the humourist triumphs over his own weakness and gains added strength from a collective nature of the victory. It can

strengthen boundaries and demarcate separate cultures. The relevance of such work to schools will immediately register with anyone familiar with them. I consider the literature on humour in more detail in Chapter 11.

CHAPTER EIGHT

BEING SHOWN UP

In this chapter I shall examine in depth one of the most important criteria among the school factors, indeed at Lowfield the most important one, according to pupils, promoting conflict. We have looked at the strain towards tolerance, making the best of it, and in the existential joy of companionship in the face of common afflictions, that is quite something in itself. At times schools are, for one reason or another, very happy places. At other times, the misery they cause plumbs the depths of despond. While teachers and pupils negotiate a *modus vivendi*, which falls somewhere between teacher aims and pupil aspirations, the school ticks over, life is normal. Both teachers and pupils develop, and operate on a 'school' plane of thought and life with its own rules, thoughts and customs, reserving a 'personal' plane for off-duty moments and private areas. They do not do this consciously, and it is often very much regretted by both sides, as when pupils complain of teachers not being persons - friendly, understanding, etc. (see Chapter 5) - and teachers complain, for example, of 'not being able to get through to such and such a pupil'. But roles provide protection. If at times they are inhibiting, they are also, at others, insulatory. Thus a teacher can withstand some 'bad' forms by becoming the teacher for those moments, separating out of his person for its own protection and leaving it behind in the staffroom, or even at home. The pupil does likewise. And by so doing, they leave behind those attributes of the person that are most vulnerable, - acute sensitivity, conscience, emotion. Much school life is an elaborate charade, performed by

apparitions. The price paid for 'playing safe' in any game is a kind of monotonous conformity, like hanging on to the ball for the purpose of playing out time for a 'draw' in a match played away from home.

Thus, while pupils feel that more of an investment of personal activity would enrich relationships, it also involves greater risk. This is well illustrated in instances of pupil humiliation. If 'having a laugh' was the main manifestation of pupils' colonizing activity, 'being shown up' was their most painful experience by a very long way. It involves being stripped of all one's defences, as a pupil, as a person, and held up nude under spotlights in exaggerated shame, and degraded by the most cutting taunts and insults. In this manoeuvre, teachers deploy an offside tactic in that, while retaining their own 'teacher' status for themselves with all its cushioned conscience, they invade the pupil's personal sphere with all its acute sensitivities, outside the common ground where they act out their parts with timeless predictability. And it hurts. It's a low blow, not only against the rules, but against the spirit of them. The only redress pupils have is to resort to clandestine cunning and invent even more ingenious ways of getting their own back, possibly through counter-ridicule, in subversive laughter.

As the biggest 'heavy conflict' producer among the pupils, and the one outstanding factor in teacher-pupil relationships fomenting dissonance in one form or another, I considered it merited detailed examination. Having been alerted to it by

talks with the fifth year pupils, I began a more systematic study of the phenomenon, talking to more pupils in the third and fourth years, observing lessons, attending functions, ceremonies and so on. There seems to be three basic types of 'showing up':-

1. - those which result from pure accident
2. - those which result from official policy as part of the official programme (not perpetrated as punishment, though that is how they are received)
3. - those deliberately performed for punishments

The first type we can hardly cater for. Wherever people interact, some will cause embarrassment to others unintentionally, e.g. by seeing or hearing them in a disadvantaged situation, by interpreting them in a way different from that intended, by a slip of the tongue, and so forth.

Regarding the second category, many of these officially sponsored embarrassments are a by-product of institutional requirements. Among the best examples are those which stem from a pseudo-olympian creed which extols the taking part in an event as opposed to the winning of it. It is perhaps most clearly manifested on the sports field and is closely associated with the House system, which itself is believed to be functional for the school. Slogans such as 'taking part', 'having a go', 'he does at least try', are used in the mystic folk-lore of inter-House competition as 'a priori' justification for putting pressure on pupils to

engage in activities in which the public manifestation of enormous differences in skill, ability and physique is positively degrading for the non-athletic.

At Lowfield, each of the four Houses was required to enter teams for Sports Day. Each event demanded two competitors and one reserve from each House. The value placed on mere entry was emphasized by the award of a point (though the point was not awarded unless the event was begun). A morning was set aside to select these teams by trial, i.e. the Houseteachers undertook to find the best at each event by observation. I accompanied one male teacher concerned with the selection of the girls' team for one of the Houses. I was impressed by the difficulty he had in persuading them - particularly the senior girls - to take part in the events he wanted them to. Before he began, he was approached by two members of his own form:

Shirley : Can we be excused Games please to go and help Mr. Groves?

Mr. Town : (frowning, hesitant) Whose Houses are you in? Go and see your Housemistress, I can't give you permission.

(They approached Mrs. Stewart. Mrs. Stewart was very busy organizing some other girls. She reasoned with Shirley, then finally dismissed the matter with, 'Well...try a jump or something!'. Shirley looked aghast. I never saw her do it.) When he came to selecting his team, he began in a friendly, democratic way by asking for volunteers for events, with a slight touch of cajolery ('This is not the

time to be modest, Susan, you are the best at the 100, aren't you?). Before long, however, he was forced by the administrative necessity of finding a team in the restricted space of time into subterfuge, (asking all of them, 'Who's the best at this?'), and later authoritarianism. The following extract from my field notes is typical of these negotiations:-

Mr. Town is trying to persuade Kim to do the high jump, Lee to do the 100 yards hurdles and long jump, and Sandra to do the shot. Kim and Lee bombard him with excuses, 'I ain't any good at it', 'I've hurt me ankle', 'My Mum said I ain't got to jump', 'I can't do it'.

Mr. Town : It doesn't matter, we get a point. (He turns to Sandra). You're a shot putter, aren't you Sandy?

Sandra : No!

Mr. Town : Yes you are! (Writes her name in).

Who are the discus throwers?

Girls : Tracey! Claire!

Mr. Town : Right, you can both do it. (Writes names in).

Claire : Javelin she's (Tracey) good at.

Tracey : No I'm not, Claire does Javelin.

Sandra : (Aside) It makes you sick, this.

Mr. Town : So you're in high jump and discus, Barbara.

(Writes).

Barbara : No I'm not. Honestly, I haven't done high jump for three years.

Mr. Town : I'll put you down for shot then.

Barbara : I can't do shot, I hurt my arm skiing.

Mr. Town : (To Tracey) I'll put you down for shot as well. (Goes).

Barbara : What I want to do is discus and long jump and he won't let me do either of the bleeders.

There was much evasion, by silence, by denying any sort of ability at the event in question, or by deliberately under-performing the trial event. But the teacher was not to be taken in. After an apology of a long jump from one senior girl he simply said in weary, authoritarian tones: 'and again'. And after the next, slightly less of an apology, 'and again'. And after the next, 'You're in, Susan.'

In fact, he was joking but Susan turned and very heatedly shouted, 'I'm not. Shut up!' and returned to her friends with a very high colour and many hostile glances at the teacher. When I asked her later what she felt so upset about, she said, 'Well, they make you look such a fool in front of everybody... I wouldn't mind if I was some good at it.'

By tradition, apparently, all took part in the 100 yards senior girls' trial. But Tracey, a large girl, was reluctant.

Mr. Town : Come on Tracey.

Tracey : No! Show me up!

Mr. Town : (Cajoling) Come on, come on.

Tracey : No, I show myself up. I always come last.

Mr. Town : (Laughing) Come on, get up, everybody else is doing it. (Tracey got up, ran and came last.)

In interviews, I talked with pupils about the Sports while they were still topical. Some enjoyed them, of course, but many were not interested. 'It's all right for those who are good at them, but if you're not you just look ridiculous.' Thus many perceived participation as a threat to their social identities.

I marvelled at the teacher's administrative and organizational expertise in parrying and countering the oppositional thrusts from the girls, and in getting his lists complete. 'We're experienced campaigners,' he said. In fact, nearly all the encounters I witnessed had an air of ritual about them. Everybody seemed to know how everybody else would react. For example, the teacher would have been astonished if all had agreed first time; pupils likewise would have been astonished if the teacher had accepted their excuses. In this sense they seemed to be operating in clearly-defined roles, and with clear expectancies of others. This teacher, incidentally, was very popular among the pupils generally. It seems that if there is a strong element of ritual about the activity and, even more, if it is part of the sacred institutional order, the teacher can avoid personal hostility, as long as he keeps to the clearly defined teacher role. In turn, some pupils may be able to transcend the situation when it comes to running, jumping,

throwing and so on, by performing as 'pupils' rather than 'persons'. This, together with the lack of intent to punish considerably softens the embarrassment felt in this type of 'showing up'.

We now come to the third category, deliberate punishment. This is the type of 'showing up' that causes most distress, and I will, therefore, consider it in more detail. I want to look at the properties and functions of deliberate 'showings-up'.

Properties

Showings-up require certain properties. They need a public arena. They are much more likely to occur in formal settings where there is probably considerable distance between the rules governing the formal procedure and the rules governing the everyday interaction - hence they frequently happen in meetings like Assemblies and co-active, formal teaching situations. They require an object who is sensitive to such treatment. Obviously, he needs to be able to interpret the stimuli in the manner intended. (It is no use using wit or scorn that someone does not understand, or adopting a tactic that he will interpret in other ways, for example as a joke). The victim must also be someone who has the ability to stand over against his 'self', take the role of the other and see himself as others see him. The 'me' is perceived as the object of humiliation, and the subject 'I' feels the humiliation. (Mead, 1935). The perpetrator acts

deliberately, though quite often impulsively, with the intent of discrediting a person or persons in ways they themselves value.

Time and the progression of events are also relevant considerations. (Bennett and Bennett, 1970). The time can be very short or long and drawn-out, depending on the sub-type. For example, the 'cataclysmic explosion' relies partly on the rapidity of execution for its effect. Consideration of the 'progression of events' reminds us that showings-up have careers. (Gross and Stone, 1964). They begin, typically, with the perception, on the part of the perpetrator, of some sort of deviance. Often the latter is embedded in interactions which, to the pupils, represent a reasonable reflection of their expectations (for example, it is not unreasonable to them, though it may be against the rules, that people talk in Assembly). The perpetrator then interrupts these expectations. The situation is fractured, and people must redefine it and their expectations of others anew. The exposed person experiences an assault on his 'identity' and feels confusion, since his previous identity was the basis of others' expectations of him. There are a number of possible outcomes. He may, for example, try to invalidate the manoeuvre by parrying the assault, trying to turn the tables and exposing the teacher; or by attempting to redefine it as unserious, by, for instance, smiling, laughing or by some such indication to his fellows to the effect of gaining group support. (Coser, 1959). At the other extreme, a

showing-up can have such a poignant impact that the basis of one's whole presentation of self are permanently damaged. (Goffman, 1955). The degree of discredit is dependent on its reception, i.e. if the victim shows no signs of confusion, the discredit will be less. Hence the attempts to cover signs of confusion, the compounding of confusion by the manifestation of it (by which he loses social poise) and the actual accumulation of credit to persons who can disport themselves through such incidents with aplomb.

Further characteristics of showings-up might be revealed by comparison with this definition of embarrassment:

'Embarrassment occurs whenever some central assumption in a transaction has been unexpectedly and unqualifiably discredited for at least one participant. The result is that he is incapacitated for continued role performance. Moreover, embarrassment is infectious. It may spread out, incapacitating others not previously incapacitated. It is a destructive disease. In the wreckage left by embarrassment lie the broken foundations of social transactions.'

Gross and Stone (1964)

While we may accept the first part of the definition as being equally true of 'showings-up', it has certain other and different properties, arising mainly from its institutional situationing. Showings-up are not always unexpected. In fact, in some ways, the expectations can have more severe repercussions in terms of punishment than the actual deed. Again, showings-up may or may not be infectious. Others present may, in fact, contribute to,

rather than share in, the embarrassment, especially if the person is unpopular. Classrooms develop their own norms, and frequently those of society in general cannot be applied. Thus, it is not uncommon for people in classrooms to shout at one another, hit one another or try to embarrass one another. Also, in some instances where perpetrated as an act of deliberate policy, showings-up may be intended to be constructive, inasmuch as they aim to restore social order.

Functions

Gross and Stone mention three functions of deliberate embarrassment: 1) socialization, 2) as a negative sanction, and 3) as a means of establishing and maintaining power. Showings-up might have these functions, but they could also have at least two others: 4) as a means of motivation, and 5) revenge. I will consider each in turn.

1) Particularly apt here is Mead's definition of socialization: '...not an internalization of norms and values, but a cultivated capacity to take the roles of others effectively.' (Mead, 1935). What keener way could there be of encouraging the development of this capacity than by involving the individual in a process which depends on his perceptions of others and which focusses on himself? Thus, teachers might be considered as having a legitimate role here. And since much learning requires emphasis and repetition, they might be excused what, at times, may appear to be unreasonable or exaggerated styles.

We might say pupils must learn how to behave in society. In the questionnaire sent to all parents of children in the third year at the school concerning subject choice, this was rated as one of the two chief aims of the school. Attitude-training is an important part of the curriculum. A pupil must learn what to expect of others so that he can measure his own behaviour against that predicted of others. His peers are important here too (and they are quite good at showing-up also), but the teacher, as a more fully socialized member of society, has deeper and wider knowledge of those expectations.

2) Many of the incidents causing the showings-up are seen as a threat to order, in relation either directly to goals, for example where an individual submits a particularly bad piece of work, especially when it is common knowledge; or and this is more frequent, to conduct deemed likely to jeopardize the normal running of the school, the most common instance of which is infraction of the learning situation. Thus to stop an outbreak of talking in Assembly, a teacher might make use of an outburst directed against one person, relying on the shock waves to silence the rest. Or in class, by developing a reputation for showing people up, a teacher might rely on its deterrent effect to secure general order. Otherwise and more frequently, showing-up might be directed at one individual to stop him doing something, the teacher relying on the implicit or explicit support of others present. The philosophy seems to be that, just as people attempt to hide physical deformities, so they will hide behavioural deformities if they can be

made sufficiently conscious of them.

3) The teacher is continually having to face challenges to his authority, and assaults on his power and status through subversive laughter, as discussed in Chapter 7, and particularly through symbolic rebellion. The 'trying out' of new teachers by pupils, seeing 'how far they can go' is well attested in the literature. (Stenhouse, 1967). In the formalized power structure of most of our secondary schools teachers are regarded as fair game for this kind of sport. Pupils may play up through sheer devilment, to 'look big', to embarrass the teacher, or to provoke certain responses such as blushing or loss of temper. Throwing missiles around the room, directing reflected sunlight onto the teacher's face, ventriloquizing his nickname while his back is turned are commonly known items in the pupil's repertoire. Arriving late for lessons, walking out of the room, talking back to the teacher are all infractions of the rules governing the teacher-pupil relationship, and are explicit denials of his authority. If, in reply, the teacher miscues by, for example, taking no action at all, or showing some signs of confusion, or by over-reacting, i.e. by losing his temper and thus self-control, he loses status in the eyes of the class as a whole, while some gains in prestige might accrue among the students for the perpetrators. If he continues to miscue over a period, he will lose all power as teacher and all prestige ('respect') in the pupils' eyes as a person.

In a very real sense the teacher is on a hiding to nothing in the traditional co-active teaching situation that obtains in most of our secondary schools. For he is set up as an individual against the group. He is the focus of attention, and it is he who is making demands on the group that may not accord with their wishes. For many a pupil he is the agent of an alien, authoritarian world who is continually challenging the pupil's conception of self. Pupils, therefore, seek to neutralize the situation by showing the teacher up. There are a number of counter-moves a teacher can make, but none more appropriate perhaps than by turning the tables on the pupil or pupils concerned, making capital out of the situation and instead of losing status, gaining it at their expense. Teachers, like pupils, make representations to themselves. They need to maintain status in their own eyes. This may lie behind the rhetoric of toughness and pupil flagellation that prevails in many staffrooms, which lends such solid support to techniques like 'showing-up'.

4) Teachers might attempt to 'shame' pupils into better work or an attitude more conducive to it. Most frequently this is done on a one-to-one basis, and there is no public humiliation. But it is sometimes done in front of others, to inspire them also. The belittling may be by reference to age - 'a child of five could have done this' - or perhaps insinuations will be made about one's personal standards or conduct such as to discredit one's cultural milieu - 'You're too busy knocking around with that boyfriend of yours!' Sometimes a direct assault is made

on one's attributes or capacities - 'You're thick, lad, you're thick!' Or the same may be implied by 'long-suffering' oaths ('Oh, my God!') and facial contortions, indicating in vivid style to all present that the student in question falls ludicrously short of requirements. Groups can be shown up in attempts to influence other groups. Even in the absence of the victims, word can get back to them and they can feel publicly outraged. For example, teachers often talk about year groups as entities having characters of their own. Thus there are good and bad years for pupils just as there are for wines. Sometimes a particular vintage may get publicly lampooned, as if to say to another year, 'Look how ridiculous and stupid they are, don't you get like that!' A fifth year girl told me, 'The thirds were told we were a rotten year, always mucking about, wouldn't get many passes and that. I didn't think that was very nice.' This neatly illustrates the ethical clash involved.

A common ploy with pupils of supposedly high status is to emphasize their deficiencies in front of their 'inferiors'. Thus prefects or senior pupils, who are not conforming in the required manner, may get shown up in front of junior pupils. Again the thrust of the manoeuvre is double-edged, for by displaying the conduct of the senior pupils as discreditable the teachers are informing the juniors, who otherwise might seek to emulate them, either that it is unworthy in itself, or that it earns this sort of punishment. And they are informing the senior pupils that if they wish

to earn and maintain status they must conform, otherwise teachers might make inroads into their positions in the informal structure of the school.

5) A showing-up may have the functions 1 - 4 in varying degrees; but at the time, the object may simply be to give as much hurt as possible. Hargreaves suggests many experienced teachers have a limited repertoire of techniques, and these are nearly all 'punishments', because they see disorder as a threat to their control and mastery and, therefore, as a personal affront. (Hargreaves, 1972). 'Almost instinctively, therefore, counter attack seems the best form of defence.' (ibid, p. 246). Hargreaves introduces Schutz's distinction between motives and intentions. (Schutz, 1967). Taking into account only the latter, the teacher frequently acts out of a spirit of 'angry revenge'. In estimating what will convey most hurt, some might resort to blows; others will choose a form of words designed to inflict psychological harm. In a cultural sense, the latter might seem more appropriate, that is it might seem more of an 'intellectual' response. Some teachers become extremely skilled in delivering this kind of riposte even though under pressure in the heat of the moment.

Some examples

Perhaps the most sophisticated, appropriate and least unpleasant way of showing somebody up is by the use of wit. But this is a scarce resource, and more commonly sarcasm is employed. This is strongly disliked:-

'I could not stand that subject. The teacher kept being nasty and sarcastic. He called us louts and said we all had lice, that was the sort of thing, in front of all the class...because we had long hair, we were dirty...just because he had not got none.' (Third year boy).

'Sarcasm' was frequently mentioned. But it was difficult to get illustrative data sufficient for a satisfactory definition. It frequently seems to contain a sneering, deprecatory quality, it reflects on a pupil's person (as opposed to his role as pupil), and carries hurtful intent at least as perceived by the pupil.

The following extracts from a talk with four 5th year boys illustrates some of these points, and also compares the 'mock' showing-up, which is pleasurable rather than hurtful, with the real thing:-

P. Woods : What are they like, these teachers that you don't like?

Andrew : Sarcastic.

Roy : One especially. Say you do something, then next day, say you don't do your homework or something, he will completely change round.

P. Woods : Is that sarcasm?

Andrew : Well, I don't mind sarcasm in a friendly way but when he means it I can't stick 'im.

P. Woods : What do you mean?

- Andrew : Well, another teacher, he's sarcastic but in a friendly way again you know. We can all have a laugh with him, but can't with this other one.
- Eric : He shows you up in front of the class.
- Ian : You don't feel free with him, do you?
- Andrew : He's not easy to get on with.

It is when an individual is singled out for 'shock' treatment that maximum feeling is aroused:-

- Christine : I don't like that subject because I can't stand the teacher. I've never really liked him since I got caught skiving, and he made that right fool of me, and I sat next to Kevin...don't you remember?...When I was at the back of the class...do you remember...I've never been so bright red in all my life.
- P. Woods : What did he say?
- Christine : Oh, nothing. I'm not telling you.
- P. Woods : Come on, tell us what he said.
- Christine : I was sitting next to Kevin, and he'd got this cartridge in his pen and he was going like that (she indicates an obscene gesture), and I just pushed him away, and the teacher was writing on the board and he must have eyes in the back of his head...and he says...he turns round with a fuming face and he says, 'Will you two stop fiddling with each other!' I never went so bright red in all my life, and

he pushed me over one side and him on the other...and everybody turned round, didn't they...in front of all my friends! You know...he made such a...mockery...can't stand him! Everybody was scared stiff in the class, everyone just sits there, all quiet.'

This vividly portrays the consumer's experience and a common teacher problem. So acutely had she felt the embarrassment that she found it very difficult to relate, but having started almost by accident, she responded to her three friends present, and addressed most of her remarks to them. There was no doubting the intensity of the hostility felt towards the teacher in question, chiefly based on that one incident. According to Christine's account, she was the victim of both Kevin and teacher. With Kevin, however, it was privatised. The teacher made the matter public, implied illicit sexual activity, thus exploding one of the stanchions supporting Christine's presentation of self to her friends, viz. her moral propriety, very plausibly to others, perhaps, because the pair were sitting at the back unseen, and everyone discontinued activity to turn around and gaze. This sudden transformation of position vis-a-vis others, from being at the back one moment, to being at the front the next is a necessary feature of the 'shock' show-up. That her closest friends were present made things worse, and that it was a 'mockery' of what had actually been happening compounded her sense of injustice.

The following extract from a discussion with four 3rd year girls suggests that 'showing-up' is a commonly used technique in this school, and not a rare event; and how the embarrassment can be compounded by inter-sex rivalry.

P. Woods : Are there any bad things about school?

Alison : Being put on report...getting into trouble.

P. Woods : Do you get into trouble a lot?

Alison : Yeah, mostly from Mr. Black, like today. I came in late.

P. Woods : What's so bad about getting into trouble?

Alison : I go red.

P. Woods : It embarrasses you, does it?

Alison : Yeah.

Kay : Yeah, all the teachers embarrass you. All the boys look...horrible it is...horrible.

P. Woods : Give us an example.

Kay : One of my friends...a teacher belted her ever so hard and she started crying and all the boys started picking on her...calling her a baby.

P. Woods : Do you think teachers show you up on purpose?

Kay : They probably think if they show us up we won't do it again because we're so embarrassed.

Implicit in all these showings-up is the 'display', even though the people concerned may not alter position. Some techniques used in schools make the display explicit, and economize, perhaps, on words and gestures. These follow the format of degradation rituals. (Garfinkel, 1956).

'Standing out at the front' or 'on chairs', for example, is designed to preserve order amongst the mass by fear of embarrassment. This is a frequent occurrence in ritualized ceremonials, such as Assemblies. In these formal, and closely regulated public meetings nothing succeeds in restoring order better than the explosion directed at one individual and its accompanying shock-wave. Quite often, because of the depersonification of the occasion and the associated nature of the showing-up (which is likely to be a very sudden, sharp and loud command, full of sinister implications such as 'Wilson! Go and stand outside my room. '), embarrassment is sharp but brief. The individual is more likely to feel his emotions rising when reflecting on the justice of the matter. This accords with Lemert's suggestion that:-

'Degradation rituals...may dramatize the facts of deviance, but their 'success' is gauged less by their manner of enactment than by their prevailing consequences... The ancient ceremonial...may strike (the accused) with awe and fear, but if nothing much happens as a consequence, the memory fades or is retrospectively rationalized.'

Lemert (1967, p.42)

Degradation ceremonies are the symbol of order and authority. It is the multitude that counts, and the individual who is the scapegoat.

As a matter of policy, the headteacher in his address might seek to discredit an individual in the eyes of the multitude. One example that came my way concerned a third year boy, widely recognized as a deviant and leader of a group. The

head had summoned him to talk about an offence, then the next day in Assembly represented him as 'a boy who had gone to the Head and "complained" about certain matters.' Thus, the leader of a deviant group was made to appear something of a 'creep', one of the most despicable types according to the group sub-culture. The boy concerned recounted this to me with great feeling. It is a good example of how to show up a deviant - it is no use abusing him in more customary ways!

Who does, and who doesn't get shown up

Not all pupils are treated the same. There is a tendency among teachers - very human and, therefore, difficult to detect and counteract - to reward (in the fullest sense of the term, i.e. in continual day-to-day interactions) those who conform most closely to the ideal pupil role as they perceive it, and to punish those who deviate a long way from it. This of course is quite well known. Lacey, for example, presents incidents to illustrate that 'teacher behaviour, conditioned by the reputation of the pupil, is one of the central factors producing differentiation.' (Lacey, 1970, p.178). Hargreaves also discusses the categorization of pupils, a process which 'provides the plan for all future interaction between the two parties.' (Hargreaves, 1967, p.105).

In relation to the phenomenon under discussion, there are two contrasting groups which predominate in pupils' perceptions of teacher-pupil relations. There are, firstly, 'pets' and 'creeps', and secondly, those who get 'picked on'.

In any group, whether streamed or not, there are likely to be some of each. The number of them and who they are might vary from teacher to teacher, but usually there is a hard core of each. It is the latter who are far more likely to get shown up, of course, as indeed to receive any kind of punishment. In fact, in a sense, the two terms are synonymous. To be 'picked on' is to be singled out, unjustly, for unfavourable treatment, perhaps because of teacher dislike or perhaps simply because he needs a scapegoat.

'Picked-ons' are usually 'known' deviants. Somehow or other, rightly or wrongly, they have acquired reputations. Their behaviour is 'predictable'. Teachers have a great deal of police work to do, and in the work of detection they have not always the time, nor would it necessarily always be best policy, to conduct discreet enquiries. Moreover, they need to maintain their own 'success' image. 'Good' teachers are those who can keep order, and this involves knowing always everything that is going on, and spotting the miscreants - or at least appearing to do so. The rise or fall of many a deputy headmaster hangs on whether he can carry off a successful 'police' image. Pressures of status, self-esteem, and good order demand that he find solutions. 'Picked ons' in a sense, offer themselves up for the slaughter.

Apart from the attribution of blame for deviant acts, teachers might also interpret similar behaviour from 'pets'

and 'picked-ons' in very different ways. This, of course, is well attested in the literature. (Lacey, 1970). The teacher's problem in dispensing pure justice is compounded by unscrupulous pupils, as the following extract from a talk with three 5th year boys shows:-

- Robert : In the classroom they'd tell us to get out and we'd ignore them. Or they'd tell you to do a detention and we wouldn't go. We swore at them - I got sent to the Head for that - and we just said they were picking on us and we got fed up and swore at them. He just told us off.
- P.Woods : Were they picking on you?
- Robert : No, we were just mucking about, they weren't really picking on us.

Results of showings-up

If effectively performed, showings-up might seem extraordinarily functional as far as immediate appearances are concerned. The sudden and complete transformation from general disorder to complete silence; the blushing and confusion of an individual who has threatened the teacher's authority; the ridicule of his peers; the self-satisfaction experienced; the deference shown by pupils who never challenge the teacher or misbehave in any way - all these would appear to testify to their effectiveness. But there have been hints throughout this chapter that this is more apparent than real.

Certainly what work we have on such matters breeds

scepticism. Hargreaves, for instance, talks of a 'punishment illusion'. (Hargreaves, 1972). A pupil might be stunned or humiliated into silence, but may smoulder in such resentment that he awaits the next opportunity for his revenge. Redl also distinguished between 'surface' and 'deeper' behaviour. (Redl, 1966). Are the pressures on teachers such as to direct their attention almost exclusively to the first to the detriment of the latter? Interestingly, Kounin in his experimental study found that the only correlation in his sample for both high and low motivated students concerning a desist that contained anger, was with some felt 'emotional discomfort', but not 'attention' or conformity'. (Kounin, 1970).

My study also suggests that the more short-term the aims, the better the chance of success. For example, I witnessed many instances of the 'shock-wave' effect following an explosive showing-up designed to restore order at that particular moment. Individuals have ostensibly been changed from troublesome deviants to silent conformists. What is not so clear is how the pupils actually interpret these interactions, and whether the outcomes accord with the aims, or whether the long-term effects invalidate the short-term. Certainly those narrated to me were experienced with much bitterness.

There are two points I would like to make concerning these results. First, taking them at their face value, they are

a good illustration of those perennial teacher problems of resolving instrumental and expressive, and particular and universal aims. The teacher might value expressive relationships, and individuals, but above all the school must be run, order maintained and his subject must be taught. In these interests, the individual might occasionally be sacrificed. What then are the effects for the individual? Showings-up can lead to a devaluation of the self. As Rose has suggested, employing Mead and Cooley's conception of the self, 'a depreciated or mutilated self is a major factor in the development of a neurosis... because an individual's ability to accept strongly held views of any kind and to act effectively to achieve those values is a function of his conception of himself - a conception that he is an adequate, worth-while, effective and appreciated person'. (Rose, 1962, p.541). I am not suggesting that most showings-up are so serious as to produce neuroses. They might do so, if kept up over a period of time, and especially if reinforced by the subject's peers. Most pupils seem able to draw strength from the group in their definition of self and of the situation, and instead of internalizing the humiliation, project it back on to the teacher in a feeling of intense dislike. It is for teachers to decide whether the restoration of order, the reinforcement of status, the quashing of the obnoxious individual and so on, is fair exchange.

The second point is this. If we accept a conflict model of teaching, such manifestations of tension and hostility may

be a necessary feature of teacher-pupil interactions. They may be functional in that they provide relief mechanisms for the outlet of such tensions. Thus the 'showing-up' may be one of a number of ways in which the teacher externalizes and defuses the conflict, just as the relating of it, together with all the other ways he tries to get at the teacher, does the same for the pupil.

There is conflict, certainly, in most teaching situations. There is an air of ritual about many interactions, as already noted, which suggests heavily structured situations. But it does not account for those teachers and classrooms where conflict does not occur; nor does it account for those conflicts which supersede the ritualized norm and which could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be considered as contributing to the stability of the institution. We need to look more closely at those teachers who habitually use the technique.

Who does the showing-up?

Not all teachers employ this technique. Perhaps there are schools that are entirely free of it. This is because, I suggest, 'showing-up', like corporal punishment, is associated with certain conditions, attitudes and ideologies, which in turn support certain systems of rule. I will outline some of their main features here in relation to showing-up, preparatory to considering the teachers in more detail in the next section.

Several typologies of teaching have been presented recently. (Esland, 1971; Barnes and Shemilt, 1974; Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Lister, 1974). The type which we are interested in, prominent in all of them, is what is often referred to as 'traditional' teaching. Hammersley calls it 'discipline-based' teaching and describes it thus:-

'There is an authoritative teacher role legitimated in terms of and based on a curriculum. The teacher role is relatively narrowly defined and the orientation to pupils is characterized by universalism, a concern with product and a high degree of control of pupil action. The pupil is seen as an apprentice adult, his behaviour tends to be conceptualized in terms of an individualistic vocabulary of motives, and human nature is considered recalcitrant material. A definite curriculum is involved, knowledge is objective and universally valid, is hierarchically structured and is contained by distinct disciplines. Learning is seen as essentially an individual, competitive activity, as involving hearing about and reproducing some segment of the teacher's knowledge, and as requiring for its occurrence the teacher's mobilization of extrinsic rewards. The learning path pupils are to follow is conceived as external and pupils must be channelled along it, they would not follow it 'naturally', they would not 'learn' without direction. Preferred and predominant techniques are formal organization of the classroom, constant supervision and frequent intervention, the use of imperatives and positional appeals, class tests and grouping by age and ability.'

(Hammersley, 1977)

The basic assumptions are:-

1. Knowledge is objective, bounded and 'out there'.
2. The child has a finite amount of intelligence or 'capacity'. Likewise he has other attributes which can be clearly labelled.
3. Teaching, therefore, consists of fitting 1 into 2,

and pedagogy is designed and school organized to facilitate this.

4. The teacher is fully acquainted with 1, and has the expertise for 3.
5. The child has a moral responsibility to seek to fill his capacity, and the teacher has a moral responsibility to provide the means for him to do it.
6. However (if social Darwinism is added) the child is innately socially irresponsible, and therefore needs to be motivated to learn and to conform.

The emphasis on matters of control and discipline, the periodic expressions of conflict, the explicitness of the authority structure of the school, follow from these premises. So do certain systems of rule, such as paternalism.

The two key elements in 'pater's' position are (a) infallibly knowing what is good for those he governs, and (b) dispensing it in ways he chooses on the grounds of superior expertise. For the governed it follows logically from (a) that they are bound to benefit as long as they are loyal and obedient. Infractions of the latter invalidate the contract (in which the government, of course, has acted for both sides). Thus in the case of infractions, the benevolence disappears and the deviants are punished in ways designed to remind them - and others - of the superiority of their mentors. 'Showing-up' is a way of

cutting down to size more in keeping with the spirit of this system of rule than detentions, reports, and even corporal punishment. If the victim accepts the humiliation, the contract will be restored and the benevolence return. Often a kindly remark or deed will follow a hurtful one, as long as the pupil is duly penitent.

Thus the showing-up technique is possibly the product of a system of beliefs which dictates how a teacher regards his pupils. This system has been around for a long time, but during the last 30 or 40 years there have been profound changes in the teacher's raw material, and it is this which helps make features of school like 'showing-up' such big issues for pupils today. A generation or two ago, pupils may have been more conditioned to accept the consequences. Since then we have gone through a period of 'child liberation' promoted by two concurrent factors. One is quite enormous changes in child-rearing practice, focussed on greater liberty, fewer rules, punishments and jobs (Woods, 1975); the other is the consigning of a new status to teenagers by the business section of society in recognition of that greater liberty, and of a new economic independence. (Abrams, 1963). All this provides a conception of self very much different from that of the pupil 30 or 40 years ago. It is one not inured to adult dominance and ridicule; on the contrary, it is hypersensitive to such assaults. The nascent conflict between teacher and pupil becomes then a clash of cultures to which there is no solution. (Keddie, 1973). It has

many manifestations. Pupils must not smoke; but Mum hands the cigarettes round after tea. Pupils should conform to school regulations on dress and appearance which usually condemn all marks of individuality and require uniformity in accordance with the 'good pupil' image; the external pressures on the pupil stress individuality and for the teenager a sophistication quite out of character with the humble pupil role. Pupils are expected to be obedient, respectful and to accept the teacher's authority without question; elsewhere, they are encouraged to reason and to speak their minds. Thus pupils exposed to this pedagogical paradigm find powerful pressures being exerted on them to perform two quite distinct, and frequently contradictory roles.

Some schools supporting this paradigm display some of the features of 'total institutions' quite prominently. Of particular interest to my theme is the 'mortification' of inmates:-

'The recruit comes into the establishment with a conception of himself made possible by certain stable social arrangements in his home world. Upon entrance, he is immediately stripped of the support provided by those arrangements...he begins a series of abusements, degradations, humiliations, and profanations of self. His self is systematically, if often unintentionally, mortified.

(Goffman, 1961, p.24)

The insistence on austere uniforms, compulsory games, forced deference patterns, the opening-up of hitherto private areas of the self (and their consignment to

posterity in school records), forced social relationships, regimentation, the authority structure, the rules and punishments, especially if they include beatings and humiliations, could all be interpreted as mortification of the self. Further,

'total institutions disrupt or defile precisely those actions that in civil society have the role of attesting the actor and those in his presence that he has some command over his world - that he is a person with 'adult' self-determination, autonomy and freedom of action.'

(Goffman, 1961, p.35)

The pressing problem of schools today is that so much education is lacking relevance. It remains outside the experience of the mass of the people, unrelated to their personal and human development. Here is one form of it:-

'The content of lessons for the exam-orientated is seen as externally determined and inevitable. Any attempt by teachers at involving the pupils in decisions is seen either as weakness or as duplicity, since the teachers themselves are not thought to be free agents in the education process, the final arbiters of which are the "O" Level and C.S.E. examiners. While this feeling is obviously weaker among pupils in the first two or three years of secondary school, it is quite often passed on to them by parents who incline to be suspicious of too much "freedom". In this deeper sense pupils and parents who are committed to education are actually more alienated than those who openly reject it. Both groups perceive education as something "outside" which can be borne for an ulterior reward and which may be rejected; but the rejectors at least have a genuine relation to such "education": they despise it. Generally, they consider that life is for living - at least when you're young. Education, as purveyed by schools and colleges, is an imposition, something that comes between you and living. Fulfilment is seen in terms of getting what you can when you can, of making the most of

your bodily needs, for your mind is seldom your own. How can it be when you have no access to any decisions that matter? "Things of the mind" are not seen as despicable, unless imposed in school: simply, they are irrelevant.'

(Holly, 1973, p.48)

But not only pupils and parents are 'alienated' in this sense, for teachers are not the autonomous perpetrators of such 'education'. Teachers also, as I shall show in the next two chapters are not engaged in a vocational activity of 'pure education', but rather a forced activity of 'survival' and 'professionalism'. 'Showing-up' is a kind of 'survival strategy' (discussed more fully in the next chapter). The conditions responsible result from the exigencies of the situation, and the means for the resolution of the problem are guided by one's pedagogical orientation.

CHAPTER NINE

TEACHERS SURVIVING

The Teachers

To summarize the argument to date:- Different senses of reality abound in school, and these result from certain divisions. Divisions in school result, firstly, from its linkages with social structure. Society is divided, and to a certain extent teachers are forced into reproducing these divisions. Pupils aid their own stratification through group perspectives, and the supporting frameworks of these are driven further in by teacher policy and school organization. Divisions also result from institutionalization. Pupils 'adapt' to school in various ways, but many lead a 'double' life as 'pupil' and as 'person'. They themselves recognize instinctively the distinguishing features of the bureaucratic institution in the form of rules, routine, hierarchy and so on, and detect a similar division in teachers too, between what we might call teacher-bureaucrats, those whose teacher-styles are governed by the school's rational and bureaucratic processes, and teacher-persons, those whose images are governed by more humane considerations. There is an undercurrent of dissatisfaction about these divisions, but nonetheless a certain resignation, a feeling of 'that's the way it is'. That is the arena in which they have to work out their adaptations, and they do it. Occasionally the two arenas, pupil and personal, public and private merge to mutual advantage as in 'warm' teacher-pupil relationships or collide, as in 'showing-up', and heavy conflict is produced.

These pupil divisions are mirrored among the teachers.

They also instinctively distinguish between public and private, between professional and lay, and they also 'adapt' to school. As 'professionals' they are part of the technocratic apparatus of society. The rationalization of the world and the growth of technological production and the social processes connected with it, have led to the development and consolidation of a structure of society and a consciousness which mirrors it, based on a belief in the omniscience of technical solutions, and a regime of experts trained and dedicated to providing them. (Berger, et al, 1973). Teachers are such experts. In the systematization of life that is such a prominent feature of the technocratic society, they control the passages from one arena to another. They alone know what it takes. Their area of untouchable competence is in the elaborate forms of certification and all that that implies in the processing of people through these gateways - C.S.E.s, 'O' Levels, apprenticeships, references. This is the teacher's area of competence. Just as doctors diagnose bodily health, vicars spiritual health or lawyers legal health, so teachers diagnose and minister to mental and personality health in the sense of fitness to job and to life. They are masters of mental and personality symptoms in a way that parents, or others unconnected in any direct sense with the certification process, cannot be.

However, they do not perform their professional duties in a vacuum. Their actual performance can be held to depend on other factors - resources, freedom, co-operation, conducive

atmosphere, and so on. Yet it is part of the ethos of professionalism never to admit error. It is impervious to default, infallible and uncontrovertible in its judgements, and these are 'facts' not dimensions. As the supportive factors grow less supportive, indeed begin to oppress, the reality of the teacher's job begins to change by degrees, until eventually, although he still gives the impression of teaching and is still attended by the professional aura, he is actually doing something else. It is a commonplace to say that we all do our jobs 'as best we can', and that, in aiming for an ideal, we inevitably fall short of it. Many have drawn the contrast between paradigm and practice, thought and deed, educationist and teacher. (Hammersley, 1977; Mieddie, 1971; Hargreaves et al, 1975; Deutscher, 1973). That implies, however, a unidirection of aim. The goal is not in question, our efforts to reach it are merely conditioned by attendant factors. But in the case of teachers in the modern secondary school state system, of which Lowfield is a typical example, there is a change of goal on occasions among the staff, when the 'transmission of knowledge' or 'preparation for exams' gives way to more personal considerations of security and ease. The teacher cannot do his professional job without the right conditions. So he falters in this field, without however appearing to do so, thus creating the hidden pedagogy of survival. Lest this sound unduly condemnatory of teachers as lacking in dedication or worthiness in some way, let me say immediately that I am not passing judgement, merely seeking to construct

a framework which will adequately explain my observations of and conversations with teachers at Lowfield, and my own experiences of teaching. In fact, as we shall see, my analysis of the constraints on teachers portrays them in the ever tightening grip of a powerful pincer movement, with 'professional demands' on one side, and 'recalcitrant material' in the form of reluctant or resentful pupils on the other, with shrinking aid or ability to resist either. In the crush, the kernel of their real job, teaching, is lost, and only the cracked shell of their personal defences remains. Teachers labour to piece it together, and as is the nature of repaired shells, it can appear deceptively full.

This might be regarded, then, as one kind of teacher mode of adaptation to circumstances that assail them. But there is another, equally as strong, and, as with pupils and their highly variable experience, the opposite of the trauma often accompanying the grim struggle for survival in the classroom. For teachers 'have their laughs' also. I refer not simply to casual chuckling, pleasantries, or the occasional joke or leg-pull. In the Lowfield staffroom, as in several others of my acquaintance, laughter was clearly something special, and it was quite separate from other activity. The customary sociological accounts of laughter were insufficient to explain this. It needed a broader backcloth. Laughter is the elixir by which teacher becomes person once more, and humanity and confidence is restored after the affliction to the person caused by the

rationalizing, bureaucratic processes connected with the teaching task, and by the crushing and humiliating struggle for survival. This squares with the pupils' categorizations of teachers discussed in earlier chapters.

These three divisions then, teachers as professionals, as survivors, and as persons, represent one way of viewing the bulk of teacher activity in all its manifestations at school. In the remainder of this chapter, I shall examine the survival aspect of teacher activity. This involves a consideration of the conditions in which they work, and their association with their work, and these establish the reference points for the splintering of their school activity. I shall examine the manifest professional role in Chapter 10, and teachers as persons in Chapter 11.

The Problem of Survival

In Chapter 1, I spoke of 'commitment' as a key concept in this study.

'Commitment refers to the willingness of social actors to give their energy and loyalty to social systems, the attachment of personality systems to social relations which are seen as self-expressive.'

(Kanter, 1974, p.126)

Teachers make a semi-commitment to their jobs. They do not invest their whole selves usually, unless they are headteachers, as I shall show later in Chapter 11. But the part commitment makes is nonetheless a real one, binding and consequential. Because of it, the teacher has to make

the most of his lot.

Another process accompanying commitment is 'accommodation'. This refers to the solving or riding of problems thrown up by the organization so as to effectively neutralize the threat to the actor's continuance in it. One of the most common techniques of accommodation is rationalization, which frequently follows decision-making. What previously might have been perceived as problems are explained away once a course of action has been chosen, and often reappear as benefits.

Continuance commitment among teachers is strong. It's their job - they are not trained for any other. Investment takes the form of career-bound choices - doing certain jobs, such as the timetable, accepting certain roles, taking courses. Also the sort of trials a teacher goes through in his first one or two years of teaching are a kind of initiation rites, a matter of pride to those who have successfully negotiated them. Sacrifice is considerable - alternative careers and the pleasures and profits associated with them. Once embarked on teaching, few turn back or alter course. Perhaps the large demands in commitment that teaching makes helps explain why so many opt out at training stage. (Lister, 1974).

The school and teaching traditions built up over the years have ways of facilitating accommodation. However, the indications are that pressures are increasing. Contributing

towards institutional momentum is institutional development, reformist educational theory and much teaching tradition. A great deal of the latter already involves much 'accommodation' to perennial constraints and difficulties thrown up by such matters as the teacher-pupil ratio, the length of the teaching day, week and year, resources, such as book provision, buildings, compulsory education and examinations. While we cannot deny that generally conditions in schools have improved over the last hundred years, it is equally true that, in some respects, in terms of demands on teachers' accommodation capacity they have worsened in recent years. The leaving age has been raised, and though the 11+ has largely disappeared, 16+ examinations have become even more the yardstick by which secondary schools shall be judged, and since C.S.E. was begun, many more pupils have become involved. Further, it seems likely that in the foreseeable future the teacher-pupil ratio will increase and resources in general diminish.

Concerning reformist educational theory and institutional development, the teacher operates within a climate of dynamic change. The growth of departments, institutes and colleges of education, of the social sciences and their application to education, of in-service training, of general interest in and recognition of the importance of education have contributed to this. While theories about comprehensive education, mixed-ability teaching, the integrated day, Newsom courses, child-centred education, progressivism and so on also pressurize him to further

adapt. Support of, and attachment to these theories is itself, of course, a product of societal developments but all, or nearly all, are framed within the same institutional context and assume its continuance.

With regard to the trend of societal developments, such as I spoke of earlier, the social consequences of technological growth are manifested for the teacher most prominently in the nature of his clientele. Musgrove has likened the school system to a 'network of bear pits' (1974, p.46). Webb found the teachers of 'Black School' distinguished by fatigue, and hence motivated by the avoidance of circumstances that might add to it, and fear - fear that 'playground chaos' would spill over into the classroom (1962). That picture has become much more common today and the problems deeper and more diverse. Every week there is talk in the educational press of growing rates of violence and truancy in the schools. And there is much teacher disillusionment. One rank-and-file member told Musgrove, for example,

'because of the pressures teachers work under, because of the system, they find they have no real control over how they teach and how they carry out the job. And this is a very degrading experience.'

(Musgrove, 1974, p.165)

I conclude, therefore, that the pressures on the teacher's accommodation capacities have increased, are increasing, and are likely to go on increasing. But, of course, the pressures differ according to (a) type of school - there

are enormous differences among secondary schools as well as between secondary and primary, and (b) teacher commitment - the less the commitment, the less the accommodation problem. If we envisage for a moment a teacher in the most besieged situation - strongly committed, but having to cope with a number of difficult classes - his problem might be construed as a crisis wherein the whole basis of his commitment may be called into question. The investments and sacrifices he has made, the side-bets he has laid down are all at risk. He faces career bankruptcy. It is, in short, a survival problem. What is at risk is not only his physical, mental, and nervous safety and well-being, but also his continuance in professional life, his future prospects, his professional identity, his way of life, his status, his self-esteem, all of which are the product of an accumulating investment process. Because of the concomitant sacrifices, for most people there is no second chance, no closing down and investing in another career. Teachers are stuck, and must do as best they can. They cannot leave their positions, they cannot change the social order, they therefore must adapt. They must accommodate these problems. Where the problems are numerous and intense, accommodation will prevail over teaching. In easier circumstances, the teacher can concentrate more on educational interests. However, it is not quite as clear cut as that. The problems are of such a nature, the teacher's commitment so complete, his position so circumscribed, that accommodation requires considerable ingenuity. It can, as I shall demonstrate, 'double' or masquerade as 'education'. I

should make clear that I am talking of 'education' here as 'the transmission of knowledge', the model overwhelmingly subscribed to by all the teachers at Lowfield.

Survival Strategies

Teachers accommodate by developing and using survival strategies. Normative means of control enshrined in the punishment structure are quite inadequate. They are, after all, devised for normative children. It is the kind of control one needs in order to teach. And survival, of course, involves more than simply control, though that is an important part of it. I define control in this instance as successfully dealing with incident which fractures the teacher's peace, or establishing one's power in a situation which pre-empt's such an occurrence. We can illustrate this by the techniques Waller observed teachers using to secure control: 1. command, 2. punishment, 3. management or manipulation of personal and group relationships, 4. tempor, and 5. appeal. (Waller, 1932). These can be subsumed under more general strategies, for example, command, punishment and tempor are all features of the general survival strategy which I term 'domination'; the others, of the general survival strategy of 'negotiation'. But these are only two out of eight survival strategies that I have observed at Lowfield and in other secondary schools. The other six are socialization, fraternization, absence or removal, ritual and routine, occupational therapy, and morale-boosting. If control is conceived of as the handling of incident, survival includes that, but also

involves the avoidance of incident, the masking or disguising of incident, the weathering of incident, and the neutralizing of incident.

A feature of successful survival strategies is their permanence and ongoing refinement. They contain the seeds of their own continuance and growth, often outliving their usefulness and festering, causing another problem for which another survival strategy must be devised. They do not take a problem out of the arena as it were, leaving more room for teaching. Rather they expand into teaching and around it, like some parasitic plant, and eventually, in some cases, the host might be completely killed off. However, like parasites, if they kill off the host they are a failure and they must die too, for they stand starkly revealed for what they are. The best strategies are those that allow a modicum of education to seep through.

Alternatively, they will appear as teaching, their survival value having a higher premium than their educational value. Theoretically, it is not difficult to point up the difference.

'The concept of teaching is totally dependent on learning, since the intention of all teaching activities is that of bringing about learning. If, therefore, a teacher spends the whole afternoon in activities the concern of which is not that the pupils should learn...he cannot have been teaching at all. In these terms, it could be the case that quite a large number of professional teachers are, in fact, frauds most of their lives because their intentions are never clear...(they) may be lost in a welter of secondary intentions.'

(Hirst, 1971)

The term 'frauds' carries unfortunate moral connotations, though technically correct. My analysis shifts responsibility largely from the teacher to the situation in which he finds himself. The factors of which I have spoken have led to teachers suffering from 'a crippling sense of uncertainty about what they are for.' (Judge, 1976). This is how I would conceive of many of the paradoxes in the teachers' situation in Sharp and Green's study school. Only their commitment with its capacity for accommodation keeps them going. And the immediacy of the survival problem, as Jackson has noted, determines the action. (Jackson, 1968). I want to emphasize this situationist point. Deutscher has stated the extreme case:-

'The social situation is a notion which is different in kind from the constructs culture, social structure and personality. These gross abstract forces not only provide little understanding of why people behave as they do in everyday life, but unlike the social situation they are fictions constructed by the social scientist; none of them, in fact, exists...These concepts are all inventions, myths, fantasies, which often blind the analyst to the very real constraints imposed by the immediate situation in which the actor finds himself.'

(Deutscher, 1969)

Becker also stresses the importance of the situation with regard to personal change in his notion of 'situational adjustment', whereby the individual turns himself into the kind of person the situation demands.

'If we view situational adjustment as a major process of personal development, we must look to the character of the situation for the

explanation of why people change as they do. We ask what there is in the situation that requires the person to act in a certain way or to hold certain beliefs. We do not ask what there is in him that requires the action or belief. All we need to know of the person is that, for some reason or another, he desires to continue his participation in the situation, or to do well in it.

(Becker, 1964, p.27)

Clearly, I would not want to write off 'structure' as completely as Deutscher seems to do, since I am concerned to account for the situation in wider forces. But if we are to understand behaviour, we must examine thoroughly the circumstances a person finds himself in, and his own perspectives on it.

One work which illustrates how teachers' perceptions of pupils contribute to this is that by Jenks (1971). The teachers in the primary school that he studied characterised most of their pupils as 'difficult'. Consequently, they distinguished among them according to their 'controllability'. 'Thus the strategy of coping with the present situation involves a central notion of control, usually exercised as silence: this is what is sought often, and against this success in the classroom is measured.' (Ibid, p.28). Control became an important part of the curriculum. Instead of a curriculum of writing, spelling and maths, it became writing and control; spelling and control; maths and control. 'Child-centred' methods were considered inappropriate by the older teachers for that type of child. Similarly, Denscombe noticed in two London comprehensive

schools that, 'the aim of motivating the unmotivated appeared to owe as much to the practical attempt to avoid disruption in the classroom as to any pedagogic "ideology".' (1977, p.252).

On teachers' own accounts, 'pupil motivation in the practical context of teaching was of concern in a manner which transcended and was analytically distinct from "progressive" or "traditional" perspectives on education.' (Ibid, p.253).

Their competence as teachers was accordingly judged by their 'capacity to secure for themselves quiet orderliness in "their" classroom', the actual task structure of teaching involving 'the prevention of noise emanating from the classroom without recourse to help from other members of staff.' (Ibid, p.385).

Sharp and Green also suggest that the 'notion of child-directed learning is related to the categorization of the pupils via the control problems presented to the teacher in an open fluid content.' There are 'bright' pupils who are easily 'biddable' and dull ones who are difficult to motivate. The teacher's solution to this problem of engaging all the pupils in work is 'busyness', where:

'children do something they have chosen and are thus engaged in activity without requiring the constant attention which the teacher is unable to give them. To the teacher, there is a logical relationship between the notion of busyness, her educational philosophy and her

actions. However, there is also a contingent relation in that the situation is objectively given in the sense of the limitation of her time-space resources.'

(Sharp and Green, 1976, p.121)

It is these contingencies that threaten to predominate in many schools. Westbury has observed that

'The interaction between the demands on the classroom and the constraints within it cause it to be a social setting that has only limited potentiality for manipulation by teachers. The recitation is a teaching strategy that permits teachers to deal, in at least a minimally satisfactory way, with the tensions that this interaction between demands and constraints creates; it has persisted through the fifty years that Hoetker and Ahlbrand have explored because the fundamental characteristics of the classroom that have made the recitation adaptive to the needs of teachers have persisted through these fifty years.'

(Westbury, 1973)

Westbury, however, concludes that 'the classroom does not alter the essential character of these teaching tasks, but it makes their execution more complex.' This provides us with a more humane view of traditional pedagogical processes such as formal teaching, question and answer and so on, whose inadequacies as educational vehicles are more usually simply exposed. It is what Westbury calls a coping strategy. However, survival entails more than coping, and I would contend that it does quite often alter the essential character of teaching tasks.

Significantly, Westbury only takes into account rather mechanical or demographic constraints, such as rooms, desks,

resources, numbers of pupils. What we have to inject into this model is a more dynamic factor, namely the nature of the pupils, within the general context of these other constraints, which materially represents the pull of societal forces; together with an element of teacher creativity. (Hargreaves, 1977).

I want now to give some illustrations of survival strategies that I noted during my year at Lowfield. I try to show in these illustrations how pervasive the survival aim is, as opposed to other aims that have been imputed, such as educating for 'social control' or 'educating for democracy' in some cases; lack of interest or anomie, for example, in others.

Socialization 'Teach them right'

Some regard conflict in schools as inevitable. Only the degree of it varies. Where there is little, it might be that fewer constraints are operating on the teachers, and/or they have perfected their survival techniques.

Some, mainly private schools, enjoy the benefit of matching prior socialization. This is the ideal state for pedagogy, where both sides have common standards, values and beliefs. Most schools spend an enormous amount of time and effort in trying to inculcate them. While some of this might be in accordance with a general 'citizenship' aim, the volume and intensity of many programmes has to be understood in existential survival terms. Many children take to schools a pre-existing culture, which is not conducive to good order

in the institution. The culture might value, for example, initiative, single-mindedness, activity, and individualism; the school, on the other hand, might favour receptivity, malleability, docility and conformity. Most schools have some blanketing techniques which achieve a veneer of these qualities and hence a working relationship. For example, many schools adopt 'mortifying techniques'. 'Showing up', as discussed in the previous chapter, is one such technique. They aim to strip pupils of certain parts of their 'selves'. Certain roles are prescribed, and the role of 'good pupil' highlighted. This will involve deference patterns (how to address members of staff, how to respond, etc.), loss of identity (as one of a group - a class, a house, a school, entities which submerge the individual), will-breaking contests, and rewards, of course, for 'proper' behaviour. Great emphasis is put on the management of the pupil's appearance. Clothing, hairstyles, cosmetics and jewellery are closely controlled, so that individual expression is limited. Most school uniforms, in turn, are drab and coarse, unless there is a well pre-socialized intake. Pupils are given drill in how to move about school, sit in desks, raise hands, speak to teachers, eat their dinners, treat their fellows; and the puritan ethic of hard work, sober living and good manners is continuously urged upon them. Some would interpret this as 'education for domestication', that is concerned with the successful induction of the young into the industrial-political system. (Freire, 1972). It is perhaps better viewed as accommodation. This is hardly a survival strategy in

itself. It is an anticipatory manoeuvre. It tries to fashion the pupil so that he will not cause other contingencies to arise. Thus, other strategies depend upon its success or failure. Generally speaking, unless pupils are already well disposed toward the official culture, socialization programmes are just as likely to alienate as to win over - as with 'showing up', for example - and most of them have a hollow ring to them. Most teachers, therefore, have to have recourse to other methods.

Domination 'Keep them down.' (Headmaster's advice to new teacher).

Generally speaking teachers are bigger, stronger and wiser than schoolchildren. If survival is basic, nothing is more basic than these facts and recourse is frequently had to them. Corporal punishment abounds in school. If formal use of the cane has been abolished in many schools there is still a great deal of punchings, knucklings, tweakings, cloutings, slappings, slipperings, hair-pullings, twistings, rulerings and kickings. One teacher told Becker in his Chicago study:

'Technically you're not supposed to lay a hand on a kid. Well, they don't, technically. But there are a lot of ways of handling a kid so that it doesn't show - and then it's the teacher's word against the kid's, so the kid hasn't got a chance. Like dear Mrs. ----, she gets mad at a kid, she takes him out in the hall, she gets him stood up against the wall. Then she's got a way of chucking the kid under the chin, only hard, so that it knocks his head back against the wall. It doesn't leave a mark on him. But when he comes back in that room he can hardly see

straight, he's so knocked out. It's really rough. There's a lot of little tricks like that that you learn about.'

(Becker, 1976, p.77)

I witnessed several such incidents. One teacher I asked about the legality of this kind of treatment said: 'The secret is to hit them where they don't bruise.'

Verbal aggression is even more widespread, as is the threat of physical aggression imbued with a special tone of nastiness for extra effects - 'If I catch you chewing gum in my lesson again I'll ram it down your throat; you'll have indigestion and you won't go for a week!' The threat is often accompanied by 'transfixation' whereby the victim is held in a vice-like grip and subjected to a wide and wild-eyed nose-to-nose confrontation. Often, of course, anger is simulated - it is part of the teacher's 'presentation of front'.

With regard to commands, Waller noted some factors which might weaken their efficacy. One should not explain it, for that immediately introduces doubt and weakens it. Nor should one express a grievance, whine or moan, threaten or exhort. Waller, of course, is talking about the establishing of authority and in the 1930's when he was writing that, traditional forms of teaching were much more universal and teacher-pupil relationships much more stable. There are still many teachers who would agree with him, but given the nature of the pupils today, it is extremely

doubtful if the formalization and mechanization of commands that he recommended as being most efficacious in his time, would be so today. This provides us with a good example of a survival technique which has outlived its usefulness and, in fact, turned into a problem itself, thus requiring some other technique to accommodate it.

It is an accumulatory process, and there is something awfully inexorable about it. Webb speculates about a new idealistic teacher going to Black School:

'Secretly he despises his colleagues. He will never be a drill-sergeant as they are. In class he tries to be relaxed, treats the lads as equals. This does not work, because they play him up. He is a chink in the armour of the system which oppresses them. At first he looks upon fighting for control as a game. So do the boys. Then he begins to get tired, there is ridicule from colleagues. The head seems to be saying good morning rather coldly. A game's a game, the new teacher thinks. But the blighters don't seem to know when to stop. And he has not enough energy left at the end of the day to do anything worthwhile. After spending the first week of the holidays in bed, he resolves to do as a kindly colleague advises - "to really get on top of the blighters next term from the word go." In a year or so, if he is not qualified to move, he is another drill-sergeant. Thus Black School perpetuates itself.'

(Webb, 1962)

Physical superiority and preparedness to use it in some way, and nastiness are useful attributes in maintaining order, for few pupils, like any other group of people, would push any interaction to the extremes where they are employed.

Sometimes this is an integral part of one's teaching. It is perhaps best illustrated in the gymnasium. It is no coincidence that many P.E. teachers progress to senior positions with special responsibility for discipline. For many of these 'survival' and 'teaching' are synonymous. The survival techniques of Games teachers are built into the structure of their teaching, and are based on relentless efficiency, continuous structured physical activity (which pre-empts any countering), strong strident voices (backed up by whistles, hooters, loudspeakers, etc.) used to prevent the activity from flagging, and a display of potential physical aggression (in shorts, singlets, tracksuits, muscles, and the smell of sweat and embrocation, etc.). This is fused into the normative order, so that barked commands like 'Stand up straight!', 'Don't move!', 'Pull boy, pull!' appear as part of the manifest curriculum. It is the accepted, legitimate technique for the aim in view.

A certain momentum is created -

'Well done!.....This is where it begins to hurt!.....Keep going!.....This is where it counts!.....Come on!.....Another 20 seconds! You can get 3 more in!.....Pressure now, pressure!'

The strict control of activities, the stentorian voice and the aggression are used to socialize -

'Somebody's changed places, who is it? Come

down whoever it was! (Boy comes down from wall bars). Why did you change? I don't know why! (Boy mumbles). Now why did you do it?! (Boy mumbles inaudibly). (Teacher, very loudly) Don't be dishonest lad! Let's have some guts and courage here! If you don't like the people you're playing with because they're weak, do something about it to make them stronger! That's no way to show you're a superior sportsman, is it? You're here to learn to lose.'

Mortification techniques are freely at the disposal of the Games staff. P.E. and Games are often compulsory; there are the showers and various stages of undress. Stripping people of their clothes strips them of part of their 'selves'. 'I made them all do P.E. in their pants the first week I was here, just to show them who's boss.' (Woman P.E. teacher).

Games and P.E. thus perform an important function in the life of the school. Not least of course, they release a great deal of bottled up drive and energy that otherwise might be released in more sedentary lessons. Of course, these techniques are employed variously by other teachers.

The same form of verbal aggression is employed during Assemblies and other such rituals. Some moral message is usually offered, and enshrined in prayers and a hymn.

These are often enunciated with frightening force, as if validated by holy authority. The function is both to alarm and to rally, but the aim is singlefold - conformity. Even if nobody joins in, the first function is hopefully achieved - the headmaster and Music master, for example, by the sheer power of their voices, and terror of countenance establish themselves as forces to be reckoned with, backed by mystical power.

Negotiation 'You play ball with me, and I'll play ball with you.'

The principle of this strategy is exchange. Commonly used are appeals, apologies, cajolery, flattery, promises, bribes, exchanges and threats -

'I am sorry I'm talking a lot this morning, but bear with me please, I do want to get this finished.'

'We'll call it a day after this one, you've worked hard this morning, well done!'

'I thought in the second period we'd have a film, then I thought next week we'd do the nature trail in Aspley Forest, but first I want us to make up those notes...'

'You can go when you've finished and not until...'

Often the commodity the teacher offers in exchange for good order and a representation of 'work' is escape from or relaxation of institutional constraint - films, records,

visits, outings, breaks, and 'easy time'. In the pupils' reckoning, these are not 'work'. Nor are they always in the teachers'. Thus on one occasion when a teacher found he had the wrong film, not even remotely to do with the subject in question, he felt he had to honour the bargain and offer the class the film regardless. Otherwise he might have had a survival problem. They accepted, for otherwise they might have had to do 'work'.

'Community Service' also comes under this rubric. Most pupils I spoke to 'had a good time' while doing it. Many did all that was required of them - gardening, shopping, making tea, etc. - but it was not that obnoxious commodity 'work'. Neither were 'projects', whether connected with C.S.E. or not. One can hide somewhere, have a smoke, and fill in the worksheet later from somebody else's. The C.S.E., in fact, is the biggest aid to teacher survival introduced into schools since the war. It draws many more pupils into the mainstream culture of the school, and still allows pupils their secondary adjustments. Thus, if you fall behind on your essays in English, you can always copy somebody else's, merely changing a few words; or you can submit your brother's or a friend's specimen in woodwork - and so on. The C.S.E. has been a success because it has allowed for this - unlike many other innovations. These examples all support Bernstein's theory that

'When the pedagogical frame is relaxed...to include everyday realities it is often, and sometimes validly, not simply for the transmission of educational knowledge, but

for purposes of social control of forms of deviancy. The weakening of this frame occurs usually with the less "able" children whom we have given up educating.'

(Bernstein, 1971)

All this adds to the teacher's resources. There are various types of admonitions teachers use. These include appeals to civilization and society in general, and the individual's fitting in to it. 'Right' conduct and attitude thus will provide access to the promised land. Waller mentions appeals to the parents' ideals, fair play, honesty, chivalry or self-esteem. (Waller, 1932, p.207). There are appeals against the fracturing of peer group norms ('spoiling it for others', group punishments for individual offences), and appeals against the fracturing of a common bond between teacher and class. Of course, the particular strategies a teacher employs will depend on other factors - his conception of children, his view of teaching, his ideological make-up. Great contrasts can be found within one school. One teacher might be essentially dominative and to keep an edge on her techniques cultivate 'social distance' from her pupils; another might be predominantly negotiative, and aim for social nearness. Of particular interest here is the development of a sense of 'we-ness' between a teacher and a retrograde class of school 'failures'. These constitute the biggest potential menace to the school, and hence require a special security arrangement. This frequently involves assigning one teacher to the class full-time, so that a notion of separateness develops between the backward class and their

own teacher from the rest of the school. Strong identification is made within the unit, with feelings of loyalty, comradeship and regard, so that it acts as its own survival agent. Appeals, if made by their teacher, rarely fail. Other teachers, however, are invariably driven to other techniques with these forms.

There is a more general negotiation strategy that teachers use based on compromises over rules, as discussed in Chapter 7. Many teachers work out, through interaction, with each set of pupils, norms and standards common to the group as a whole. Everybody feels bound by such democratic procedure. Thus teachers might choose to ignore certain forms of behaviour as long as they are not perceived as institution-threatening or publicly flaunted. 'Smoking behind the cycle shed' is an obvious example. The same can apply to 'work'. Teachers often feel obliged to abandon their absolute standards and settle for what they can get from a class, or from an individual.

Fraternization 'If you can't beat them, join them.'

'One of the ways to resolve extreme conflict between teachers and children is for the teachers to become less adult and, in some sense, enter into the world of children. This requires isolating oneself from adult interactions and assuming some of the language and style of children.'

(Waller, 1932)

Some staff were:

'not altogether sympathetic with the social aims of the school, but fulfilled an informal role which was functional for the school organization in defusing conflict within the

pupil identity of working-class children which might otherwise have made it difficult for them to continue in the upper years at the school. As such, these staff acted in the way described by Coser (1956) as a "safety valve institution", channelling discontent and hostility, while keeping intact the relationship within which the antagonism arises.'

(Wolton, 1973, p.9)

'The concern with interest and motivation as exhibited through practical problems in the schools owed as much to the aim of preventing disruption, as to the aim of promoting the inculcation of knowledge.'

(Denscombe, 1977, p.253)

A prominent survival strategy is to work for good relations with the pupils, thus mellowing the inherent conflict, increasing the pupils' sense of obligation, and reducing their desire to cause trouble. It might be thought that this is fairly central to 'progressivist' forms of teaching. But the teachers at Lowfield strongly opposed 'progressivism'. It is taking place, therefore, within more traditionalist styles.

Fraternization takes many forms:-

Culture-Identification

Young teachers especially, by their appearance, style of dress, manner, speech and interests frequently identify strongly with the pupils. They are often very popular. Implicit alliances can form against the main structure of the school, but, as with teachers of 'backward classes', it can ultimately work in the school's interests, since much

bad feeling is defused through this bond with members of staff. On the other hand, of course, pupils with their own survival problem might try to increase their benefits by playing off one teacher against another. ('So and so lets us chew in his lesson'). So it can promote instability. Older teachers can assume parts of this role. For example, they can display signs of alienation from the official culture, especially where it seeks to dominate. Explicit or implicit disapproval before pupils of a rule or action, especially if perpetrated by the upper hierarchy, is common. In fact it has been suggested that a major function of the head and his deputies is to soak up a lot of the bad feeling in the school, leaving a pleasanter field for front-line teachers and pupils to work in. Some identify with the pupils against outside aspects of the establishment:-

'I loathe the vicar who goes up, takes off his watch - and you know you're going to get your twenty minutes' worth - and he says, 'I've got four points to make' - and he's only done two of them after fifteen minutes...'

(Interestingly, this teacher betrays himself before typical secondary modern pupils by identifying with the establishment at all!)

Many teachers share in cultural influences which cross generations. Thus some have recourse to an earthy humour which marks them not as a 'teacher, a man apart', but as a 'man of the people'. Dirty jokes are not excluded, and

seem to be particularly appreciated by rebellious male elements in the school. Another shared cultural influence is television. Some lessons I observed abounded in references to popular television programmes, advertisements included. While this might have a pedagogical value, it also has important survival repercussions for the pupils' perceptions of the teacher's identity. Sport can also form a bridge. For example, gangs of adolescent boys follow a football cult. Their discourse consists of jocular abuse directed at others' chosen teams and vigorous championing of one's own at all costs. This aggressive banter is typical of their life-style and is indulged in as a form of play. On these terms it is open to teachers, and sometimes they take advantage of it.

Much survival teaching takes the form of entertainment. It is quite often reflected in styles of speech and associated with culture-identification. Thus one teacher I observed employed a local, chatty, pubby style of speech in his teaching, which he indulged to good effect from the control point of view. Another had a cosmopolitan, youthful, 'with-it' style which reinforced his identification with the pupils. Another related almost everything he said to television programmes, making liberal use of standard phrases, and copying situation and character comedy. Less 'identification' associated are forms of teacher wit and humour. A stage manner helps, and the fun is often directed good-naturedly and matily towards the inmates. The displacement of reality in humour neutralizes

any potential conflict.

'Oh! my God, that smell! Is that that Brut again? Open a window, stand back.' (Hangs out of window, gasping. Returns to desk.)

'Oh! my God, those socks! (Covers eyes with hand, puts on sunglasses.)

'Now, who saw Maxim Gorky last night? That's the programme you tune into between Mickey Mouse and Long John Silver.'

By this form of humour the teacher retains control and reinforces status. It is a kind of humorous, rather than aggressive, domination technique, but the aggression lurks in the background.

Sometimes, however, a teacher directs laughter upon himself, frequently belittling his formal role. These divergences from the mainstream expected behaviour place him in a wider context and invalidate the narrowness of the immediate scene. Impersonation is a favourite vehicle:-

Example 1 - The teacher is talking about raising hands when the pupils wish to reply.

'In Germany, and don't do this here please, other teachers might not like it, the pupils go (here he snaps his fingers together)...and at the back they even do this (does it with both hands, jumps up and down and shouts, "Sir! Sir!")'

Example 2

A pupil comes in to the room and requests the 'German helmet and gas mask'. Teacher goes into the cupboard, and comes out wearing them. 'Mein Gott in Himmell!! We have ways of making you talk!' and gives a five minute impersonation of Hitler.

Many aspects of modern 'progressive' teaching embrace the entertainment principle. The use of film, television, radio, records, and devising the projects, field-work and so on have control as a major aim. Interestingly, most general courses, particularly ROSLA, depend almost entirely on film and T.V. Also teachers devise their own little tactics. Many of them, for example, took the form of quizzes of one sort or another. One such was a teacher who punctuated a formal question and answer technique with 'hangman' games when no one knew an answer. Class involvement and hence control was always greater during the games.

Another form of fraternization is indulgence. This is consciously to allow the pupils a far greater measure of liberty than is customary for teachers. In negotiating, the teacher goes to the extreme of his bargaining counters. His norm of behaviour is displaced entirely towards the pupil culture.

Here is an extract from my notes of the beginning of one such session:-

I sat in a corner at the back, as usual, next to Mark Godfrey. He was peashooting away.

Mark : Great teacher this is!

P.Woods : I don't know, is he?

Mark : Yeah, he fixes things up.

Steve : It's a muck about.

Mark : No, it's not that, 'e's great. (He aims off another pea, scores a hit on Peter Matthews, who prepares to retaliate.)

Paul : (Loudly) Cor Steve! You done a fart in English, you done one now! (Paul gets up and moves over to teacher; suddenly there are more shouts from this corner, and a mass exodus.)

Mark : Bloody 'ell Dunsley, you've dropped one again! (He holds his coat collar up. Paul comes back, groans, and goes away again.) On the other side of the room a group of girls are very noisy. Michelle is whooping and squealing - they have a letter. Janet appeals to teacher loudly, but humorously, 'Tell her off, Sir, she's getting on my nerves!' Teacher (attending to an individual ignores her.

The lesson continued in this vein for the whole period.

Yet it was not the anarchy it appeared to be. The teacher did much individual and small group tuition. None of the disorder was directed against him, nor did it involve less yield of work than was normal for this form, whom I accompanied to all their lessons. Another indulgent

technique is the indiscriminate backing of 'winners'. Sometimes pupils do get interested. Teachers capitalize on this interest. No doubt this frequently has pedagogical value, but equally it is often done unrelated to the lesson as planned and only justified post hoc.

In co-education schools, flirting is a widely used technique, especially by male teachers with female pupils. Since sex is one of the most prominent interests of the more rebellious girl pupils, it can be a great aid in securing their goodwill and co-operation. As we saw in Chapter 5, many of these pupils see school in purely 'social' terms, as compared with instrumental or vocational, and their idea of 'social' differs a great deal from the school's 'social training' or 'education for citizenship', so topical with ROSLA. It is much concerned with the basic elements of interaction, and is rooted in their own culture. Some teachers spend their careers fighting this, others capitalize on it, while perhaps denying it.

Teacher : Don't flash your eyes at me, Susan. It might work with your Dad, but it won't work with me!
(However, his expression and tone indicates that it is working.)

Susan : (Faking embarrassment) Oh! Oh!

Teacher : (Mimicking) Oh! Oh! (He carries on up the row, flashing his eyes at the girls who smile and giggle in mock confusion.)

The sex element is strong in Games. I noticed during a

mixed game of volley ball, that occasionally when serving or receiving, an individual would be the centre of attraction, but that one's failings in this arena are laughed at and experienced in a different way from lessons, when they might have felt acute embarrassment. In the role of 'female' as opposed to pupil, all seemed to recognize that it was quite acceptable even perhaps desirable, to be incompetent at Games. The girls responded with such feminine wiles as ogling, putting out the tongue, pretending to hide, confusion and so on. Thus their participation in the game was sublimated, and they found salvation in the sexual front. This technique was more used by 'incidental' Games teachers. Full time Games staff were much more dominative and aroused far more resentment, especially among teenage girls. This was because they were only permitted the role of 'sportswoman', and their failure at Games was of first-rank criticality.

Here is an extract from my observation notes of an incidental Games male teacher and a group of teenage girls round the trampoline:-

Teacher : Who wants a double bounce? (Pet puts her hand up.) Right-o, give us a push up. (Two girls help push teacher up by the backside.) Hey, watch it! (Good humouredly.) Teacher and Pet have a double bounce, teacher working Pet to state of collapse and confusion. As he gets off, he pulls another girl on, and she collapses, bouncing and laughing in the middle of the trampoline.

Absence or Removal 'Teachers would be all right if it wasn't for the pupils.' (Teacher folklore)

One certain way of ensuring survival is to absent oneself from the scene of potential conflict. Some teachers achieve this by upward mobility at one end, or by never starting at the other.

However, few achieve such absolute absence. Most have to make do with partial absence, some official, some unofficial. Because it is the most efficacious and the most relative (i.e. one usually only gains at the expense of others) of survival techniques, it is the cause of intense and sometimes bitter struggles. This is why the timetable is of such critical importance. 'Survival' features prominently in its construction. 'Weak' teachers have to be protected, 'good' ones rewarded. 'Weak' ones can be given fewer lessons, none of the hard classes and the most favourable rooms (a good example of how incompetence might be rewarded in our educational system). Whence then come the rewards? Fortunately for the hierarchy there are some 'in-between' teachers consisting of a faceless group of those who have not yet arrived at the school, a 'disloyal' group consisting of those who are leaving or applying for other jobs, and a rebellious group who, for some reason, have got in bad favour with the hierarchy. These take up the slack of 'bad' forms, poor rooms and overloaded timetables.

Manipulation of the timetable protects the weak, rewards the

good, and penalizes the unknown and unworthy. The same applies to timetable adjustments that have to be made in the day-to-day running of the school. One of the 'rewards' is free periods. The importance of survival as an organizing principle in the teacher's day is evidenced by the neuroticism attending this topic. Losing free periods can be quite traumatic, for survival becomes that bit harder; it can be very much harder if, in exchange for an idyllic 'free' one is confronted by somebody else's extreme survival problem - a 'bad' form in 'bad' circumstances.

Failing the legitimate acquisition of 'free periods', one can absent oneself in other ways. Unloading the worst troublemakers on to others is a common device, and is legitimated in schools where certain teachers have been given financial and status compensation in return for a 'counselling' function. One can take days off school, though the folklore regards this as defeatist. It also saddles equally hard-pressed colleagues with extra responsibilities. Thus it is more customary to steal extra minutes at the beginning and end of 'breaks', use delaying or deferring tactics during lessons or work absences into one's teaching. Many new courses and styles of teaching that have come into vogue since the Newsom Report are characterized by a large amount of absence. Link courses, work-based courses, Community Service, Fieldwork, individual and group projects, all aid teacher survival by virtue of separating the combatants for much of the time. Techniques like pupils taking Assemblies, running parts of lessons or

initiating and controlling work on their own, cleverly turns the opposition back on itself and neatly fits into fashionable educational philosophy, while the teacher sits on the side-lines.

If teachers choose to maximize their survival programme, they will follow a policy of non-volunteering 'keeping out of the way', and 'keeping one's nose clean'. Some teachers have their 'secret places'. Some feel the need to go out - often to a local pub - during the mid-day break. Some are strictly 'nine-to-four' teachers, often for survival reasons rather than lack of interest or sense of vocation. Teachers can be absent in spirit. They can 'be away' and have their 'removal activities' as well as the pupils. (Goffman, 1961). Teachers occasionally daydream, fall asleep, look out of the windows, fail to pay attention, defer or ignore problems, pass or waste time, pretend something is happening which is not, and otherwise evade the head-on conflict with reality.

Ritual and routine 'You'll be all right once you get into the hang of things.'

Bernstein has described the symbolic function of ritual as

'to relate the individual through ritualistic acts to a social order, to heighten respect for that order, to revivify that order within the individual and, in particular, to deepen acceptance of the procedures which are used to maintain continuity, order and boundary and which control ambivalence towards the social order.'

(Bernstein, 1973, p.54)

In British state schools rituals

'facilitate the transmission and internalization of the expressive order of the school, create consensus...deepen respect for and impersonalize authority relations. They also serve to prevent questioning of the values the expressive order transmits.'

(Ibid, p.65)

Much ritual is to be located in the expressive order of the school. But there are ritualistic qualities about certain forms of teaching. Bernstein again has noted the social control element that lies behind much systematization of our teaching.

'Where knowledge is regulated by collection codes, social order arises out of the hierarchical nature of the authority relationships, out of the systematic ordering of the differentiated knowledge in time and space, out of an explicit, usually predictable, examining procedure.'

(1971, p.63)

Elsewhere he has observed

'It would also not be entirely wrong to suggest that the incentive to change curricula arose out of the difficulties secondary schools were experiencing in the education of the non-elite children.'

(1972, p.103)

In turn, this suggests the possibility that survival strategies based on ritual and domination were becoming counter-productive, and needed to give way to more negotiative strategies.

In pluralistic, industrialized societies the value systems

are various or ambiguous, and because of other societal developments which I spoke of earlier, the

'social basis for the ritualization of the expressive order of the school will be considerably weakened and the rituals may come to have the character of social routines.'

(1973, p.66)

Perhaps the best example of this is Morning Assembly. Morning after morning the school where I did my research went through the formula of mustering, saying a prayer, singing a hymn, and listening to a peroration and exhortation from the headmaster. I described in Chapter 7 the survival problem this created for the pupils, and how they coped with it. It is another example of a survival strategy that has outlived its usefulness and degenerated into yet another problem.

However, teachers would find it difficult to do without routine. Musgrove points up the problem -

'The computer will take much of the routine out of teaching in schools, and will make possible far more learning which is not school-based. Although most people complain about the routine in their jobs, they would probably go mad without it. Without routine we are constantly dealing with unique, unprecedented, non-recurrent and non-standard events. This may be exhilarating; it is also exhausting. We can expect teachers to be in a state of constant exhaustion.'

(Musgrove, 1974, p.45)

That prophecy for the future is for all too many teachers ancient history. Routine, systematization, drill, have

provided a safeguard. Black School provides a vivid example. Because of the boys' 'irrepressibility, rule-breaking and spontaneity' and the teacher's fatigue and fear of playground chaos spreading into the classroom, he insists rigidly on good behaviour and adopts a rigid style of teaching. Consequently, only rather mechanical skills can be taught.

'Only certain rigid work and conduct standards can be conveyed by drilling. And these make or maintain dislike and, therefore, the need for drilling.'

(Webb, 1962, p.265)

Teachers become addicted to routine and ritual. Once instituted, they are extremely difficult to get rid of. Rituals become associated with 'tradition' and 'ethos' and to change them means discontinuity and disjuncture. Routine is a narcotic, taken to soothe the nerves and mellow the situation. Once established, to do without it would involve the teacher in severe withdrawal symptoms.

Routine imposes a structure on school life which pupils and teachers almost automatically come to accept, and serve as a basis for establishing control. Registration, form periods, Assemblies, timetables, lesson structures and so forth are the bones of the school day. Within this overall structure, individual teachers establish their own routines. We are all familiar with the archetypical teacher of fiction, middle-aged, soberly dressed, extremely mannered and eminently predictable in all his movements.

As Webb noted, this carries implications for what and how one teaches. Gump has shown that self-paced activities involve more difficult pupil management problems than in externally paced activities (1971). Westbury has portrayed recitations, and text-book teaching as coping mechanisms (1973). Furlong has noticed, from the pupils' point of view, that 'work' and 'learning' is a desiccated, skeletal, structured and measurable form of knowledge (1977). To them, learning is 'measured accomplishment'. A recent report found that a large percentage of the writing done in school is done for the 'teacher-as-examiner', and not for the purposes which might do more to foster pupils' learning and development. (Britton, 1975). 'Teacher-as-examiner', it must be realised, is masking 'teacher-as-survivor'.

Many a teacher who has tried an experiment and felt it has not been working and, disorder threatening, has reverted in mid-stream to more formal techniques. The best example is the dictating of notes. This is an extremely useful device from the survival point of view for it gives pupils to believe they are being spared doing their own 'work', and thus secures their co-operation, involving quiet application, for considerable periods at a time. This is not to say that much activity associated with 'new' teaching techniques does not have a strong 'routine' component. Work cards, structured exercises, group activities, programmed learning, audio-visual techniques all provide for it, and perhaps their persistence is to be explained by it.

Occupational Therapy 'It passes the time.'

The principle of pupil therapy is bodily involvement accompanied frequently by dulling of the senses. The aim is to take the edge of boredom or fractiousness, and thus, prevent incident arising. Pupils sometimes try to provide their own therapy, like playing cards, carving on desks, doodling on paper, reading comics. But though therapeutic, these activities are counter-official. Education must be seen to be going on. This is the purport of the 'busyness' that Sharp and Green talk of. The injunction to 'be busy' is legitimated by the philosophy of child-centred education.

At Lowfield, I encountered many therapeutic techniques. Drawing maps, pictures, patterns is good therapy. This is one of the reasons why Art is a popular subject, particularly among bored and rebellious pupils. History, Geography and Science teachers make good use of the knowledge. 'Play' is also useful. The simple experimental kits provided for pupils' tinkering in Science lessons allows for this, and for this reason the practical subjects - Woodwork, Metalwork, Cooking, Needlework, etc. have strong therapeutic value. De-inhibiting activities like free, unstructured Swimming are wonderful therapy, and can spread their beneficial effect over several classroom periods before and after.

Pupils often fill in time with 'jobs'. 'Have you any jobs, Sir?' is a common refrain from bored, inactive pupils. So teachers request blackboards cleaned, drawers tidied, corners cleaned up, pencils sharpened, files ordered, and so

on. It can be the major 'official' activity of older pupils outside the mainstream of the school, especially in their final year when there is common acceptance of the failure of the special 'official' programme designed for them. The girls can make tea and wash up for the staff, the boys can repair gates, glasshouses, paint sheds, and so on. They are usually glad to do these jobs, for therapy is a more lasting and satisfying antidote to boredom than 'mucking about'.

A teacher can engage in therapy unilaterally. Busying oneself can help, when all around is chaos and threatening. Marking books, setting up equipment, giving individual guidance, can occupy one's mind and cut out the general scene. Sometimes a teacher's whole programme is little more than therapy, like a series of Science lessons I observed. Here, the teacher carefully constructed the equipment for his experiment, and went dutifully through the procedure from beginning to end, explaining as he went, and elaborating on the application of what he was doing to the modern world. It was a model lesson in many respects, but none of the pupils in these classes listened. Moreover, they obviously were not listening, but clearly divided into their own groups and devising their own entertainment, often quite noisily. The two elements, teacher and pupil, though in the same room, seemed totally oblivious of each other. The only time when they came together was in the last ten minutes of the two hour period, when they were dictated the results of the experiment, and they recorded them in their

exercise books. This teacher neutralized the control problem by concentrating exclusively on the 'stimulus' aspect of teaching and totally ignoring 'response'.

Another form of therapy takes the form of 'spinning-out' exercises. One example involved non-examination, non-scientific subjects allocated half-day slots because of their parallel grouping with Science subjects which were reckoned to need that kind of block provision. I observed some of these sessions, and always, enormous time-wasting and time-passing was resorted to as a survival technique. It was taken up with arriving late, finishing early, chatting with the pupils before and after, preparation of lesson and materials for it (during it), interruptions which seemed to be welcomed and capitalized upon, peripheral story-telling and general nonchalant pace.

Morale-boosting 'We have to believe.' (Deputy headmaster)
Just as socialization is an anticipatory strategy, morale-boosting is a retrospective one. For teachers need a survival strategy to 'account for' their other survival strategies. They mentally neutralize the survival problem, and they do it in two ways - by rhetoric, and by laughter. I am speaking of rhetoric here as Green has done, i.e. it 'explains and constructs the necessity of the conjuncture within the disjuncture. It constructs the paradox in the teacher's actions and perspectives as itself a conjuncture.' (1977).

Aiding this is another aspect of commitment, group cohesiveness. Kanter defines this not in terms of socialability and mutual attraction, but rather in terms of the ability to withstand disruptive forces and threats from outside the group ('sticking together'). This sort of commitment involves primarily 'forming positive cathectic orientations; affective ties bind members to the community, and gratifications stem from involvement with all the members of the group. Solidarity is high, and infighting and jealousy low.' (Kanter, 1974, p.128). Group cohesiveness among teachers is high, though it frequently pertains to sub-groups within a staff. Friction between these is only another feature of the internal cohesiveness of the groups.

The deeper the commitment, both in terms of continuance and group cohesiveness the more extensive the rhetoric, and attachment to it. Sharp and Green give a good example in their discussion of 'busyness' as already noted. To the teacher 'there is a logical relationship between her notion of busyness, her educational philosophy and her actions.' (1976, p.121). If the children are 'busy' and 'getting on with it on their own' or 'finding something to do', this is well within the spirit of child-centredness.

Well-established rhetorics attend many of the techniques discussed here in relation to secondary schools. I have touched on the legitimization of certain forms of absence and removal. Pupils running lessons, taking Assemblies, going

on projects, are in line with progressive philosophy, as are certain aspects of therapy ('more involvement') and fraternization ('treating the pupils like people'). There is now a vast thesaurus of 'progressive' vocabulary and idioms, from which the teacher might draw to construct his own vocabulary of motives (free expression, integrated learning, activity-based learning, project work, free choice...).

All of the specific instances I have mentioned have a rhetoric closely attending them. Young teachers, for example, are best 'thrown in at the deep end', it is 'good experience', and better known sooner than later whether they are going to last. School uniform is championed in the interests of 'equality', preventing the poor being exposed by the sartorial elegance of the rich; of school 'ethos', and the qualities of pride and loyalty; and of 'utility', for identification purposes. Mortification procedures and domination techniques are represented as socializing devices in the interests of the individual, whose naturally savage and uncouth character must be tamed and channelled along the 'right' paths to a civilized society. The latent survival function of the separated form of potential trouble-makers with their teacher is occluded by a rhetoric which asserts the peculiar characteristics of these pupils, personal, environmental, mental, which 'entitles' them to special preferential treatment, and the relationship they develop with the teacher concerned, which ensured the success of the survival manoeuvre, is presented as evidence

of the justification of the rhetoric. Thus the problem is collapsed back into the situation and contained within a solution that masquerades, very powerfully and convincingly, as education. Even the 'jobs' that they do as therapy are justified as 'education'. In one case, for example, the boys in 5th had to decide 'how much paint was needed', 'who was going to do which job', 'how they were going to order the materials', 'how much they were going to cost', 'how long it was going to take', and so on. This was the view of the teacher in charge of the educational value of one particular job the boys did. In essence though this is not far removed from Mr. Squeers' technique:

'We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby - the regular education system. C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, win, d-e-r. Winder, a casement. When the boy knows this out of a book, he goes and does it.'

(Dickens, 1839)

The growth of the counselling function in schools has legitimated the 'removal' technique, as mentioned above. Moral crusades and deviance amplification in the service of Parkinson's Law have provided a vast amount of rhetoric to support the counsellor's position, function and raw material.

In the struggle for survival, detection and celebration of the enemy's weakness is an enormous morale-booster. Hence the teacher's insistent representations of pupils in psychological terms as 'thick', 'idle', and the prevailing 'norm of cynicism' to be found in the staff rooms. One of the two beliefs on which the ideology of Black School staff

was based was that the boys were rather hateful. (Webb, 1962). From this, the individual teacher might draw renewed strength, after flagging perhaps, towards the end of a double period and allowing the pupils to gain the upper hand. The greatest danger is that teachers should doubt what they are doing. Usually, the supportive voice of colleagues available at key points of the day, provide sufficient reassurance of his beliefs and reinforcement of status. Thus pupils invariably come to be held fully accountable for failings. They are responsible and free agents. Thus, with regard to the segregation that occurred in the school as the result of the subject choice process, I was told by some that 'they had the choice'. There was no acknowledgement by these teachers of factors like pre-conditioning, group perspectives and channelling procedures, which constrain and direct these choices (though as noted in Chapter 4, some were well aware of them). Most of such factors are so completely beyond the control of the school that knowledge of them could possibly undermine commitment and hence powers of accommodation. As I have elaborated it, commitment provides for its own defence. Teachers, therefore, would resist such knowledge.

For teachers to 'get on' in their careers, they must 'believe' in these ways; and the more they get on, the more they must believe. The firmer the commitment, the greater the accommodation. This applies particularly to belief. There are several other reasons for this. Sharp and Green point out that the deputy head in their school had to

'contend more directly with the general crisis in school-parent relations than the other staff. The ideology of domestic pathology has become more sharply articulated for her as a device for understanding and handling her situation.' (1976, p.121)

Webb imputed guilt to the upper hierarchy in Black School, though not to the teacher, whose drill-sergeant role was too narrow for him to have enough freedom to be held accountable. The head master eases his guilt by busying himself in administration, or exaggerating the school's achievements. (Webb, 1962). Perhaps also, guilt helps the upper hierarchy to invent and sustain a higher level of rhetoric.

However, it need not necessarily be a product of guilt. It is the responsibility of the head and his deputies to facilitate the teaching task for his staff. The provision or reinforcement of a rationale to support their survival strategies is a service to them, while of course his own responsibility for the school in general, as opposed to the teachers' classroom problems, causes him to have survival problems of a different order. He is supposed to lead and guide. Policy is his business, and where there is no scope for educational policy, he should be an expert in accommodation policy.

Less committed teachers who have less of an accommodation

problem, often see through this rhetoric and boost their own morale by merciless teasing and baiting of the upper hierarchy during their absence. This is one of the main subjects of staffroom humour, a supremely important factor in teacher survival, so much so, that I devote the whole of Chapter 11 to it.

Summary

I have outlined a model for the analysis of teacher behaviour which attempts to link the self with the system. At a systems level, I have spoken of institutional momentum and societal developments, which may or may not run counter to that momentum. At the individual level, I have spoken of commitment, which is bound up with institutional momentum, and the nature of the clientele, the pupils, which is bound up with societal developments. I have introduced the notion of accommodation, which is a product of the confrontation of these two factors. Where the confrontation is intense, the teacher will meet with a survival problem, which he will relieve by use of survival strategies. These do not necessarily facilitate teaching. They often take the place of it, and even assume its guise. Success ensures the establishment of a strategy, but many outlive their usefulness and turn into problems themselves. New teachers are quickly initiated, and so the system perpetuates itself. If there is a 'hidden curriculum', there is also a 'hidden pedagogy'.

Of the strategies I have identified, socialization is

anticipatory, rhetoric retrospective. Domination and ritual and routine might be associated more with traditional forms of teaching. The overall heuristic framework yields a number of hypotheses. Here are some examples:

1. The bigger the commitment, the wider the accommodation.
2. The bigger the commitment, the wider the use of rhetoric.
3. The bigger the commitment, the more favoured will be the institutionally supportive strategies (socialization, domination, negotiation).
4. The less the commitment, the more favoured will be the institutionally disruptive techniques (absence and removal, fraternization).
5. The more 'professional' the commitment, the more professional strategies will be favoured (socialization, rhetoric, negotiation, domination).
6. The more 'survival centred' the commitment the more those strategies involving separation of teacher and pupil and time-passing will be favoured (absence and removal, therapy).
7. The more the accommodation, the greater the survival strategic orientation, and the less the education. And the converse of this.
(This applies at both individual and institution level).

So much of what counts as 'teaching', therefore, can be a fake commodity. This is certainly alienation of a sort,

but not in the ultimate sense that Illich and Holly talk about, whereby 'education is defined for the pupils by the dominant forces in society, (and) education is removed from the essential being of the learner and objectified as an alien commodity which can be consumed or rejected' or whereby 'schools make alienation preparatory to life'. (Holly, 1973, p.59). This alienation is a result of pressure on the teacher, not a conspiracy on the part of capitalist society. This appears to be Musgrove's meaning when he says, 'What is alarming is not that we have a high degree of alienation (we don't), but that so many people invest meaningless activity with meaning, trivial work with high significance.' (Musgrove, 1974, p.179). This pressure is why there has been so little real change in our educational system, despite a massive drive by theorists since the war, and why, in the light of the economies to come, there is likely to be little in the future. For example, there is much latent objection among teachers to team teaching, open-plan schools, integrated teaching. This is because they threaten the privacy of the teacher in his classroom, in other words, they threaten to destroy the whole basis on which their survival strategies have been constructed and on which they depend for continuance. In exchange they offer doubtful benefits, but certainly a whole new range of survival problems of unknown order. While teachers are shackled and threatened by present situational constraints, notably the teacher-pupil ratio, the required working week, compulsory education until 16, they will be unable to break

out of the protective cocoon they have spun themselves.
For they will be forced to continue to think of survival
first, and education second.

CHAPTER 10

TEACHERS REPORTING

The question is immediately raised, that if the teacher's lot were improved such as to return him from the 'survival' to the 'educational' side of the threshold, what, exactly, would he be doing? Would he, for example, be freer to concentrate on 'transmitting knowledge', 'developing skills and aptitudes', 'facilitating the growth of the child', or other activities that have, from time to time, been defined as 'education'? There could be no doubt where this would land the teachers of Lowfield - firmly with the transmission procedures so typical of institutions dominated by certification processes. And these are surrounded with professional, as much as with educational, considerations. It is very difficult, if not impossible to find a 'pure' state of education. For it is masked, on the one hand by the demands of self-preservation, and on the other by the requirements of professionalism. In the systematized processual pigeon holing that is so typical of the technocratic society, teachers hold a supremely important position. They are the dispensers of keys, the judges of the worthiness of the recipients, and the detectors of doors whose locks match the keys. Over the years, the demands of the industrial state, the responding rationalizing process in the education system, the self-protecting and -advancing interests and growth of corporatism among a growing body of teachers, the expansion of the compulsory education system to the point where it has taken up nearly a quarter of the entire life expectancy of society, all have interacted and compounded the process by which teachers have staked out undisputed claims to monopoly over this particular area.

It is their preserve, and they have acquired the special attributes of a profession. Not quite as special as doctors and lawyers to be sure, but still they are recognized as the guardians of an important passageway in life, armed with mystical knowledge, skills and power. Few parents can coach their children for 'O' level. It is an ironic anomaly that teachers should legally be held to be acting 'in loco parentis'. This, of course, refers only to bodily welfare. The schooling, selection and placing of children remains firmly the preserve of teachers. But once again, the huge gap between the personal, human, individual, particular world of the parent's child and the public, dehumanized, mass, universal world of the teacher's pupil, is unrecognized in practice, cloaked by the misty veils of professionalism. Though teachers are beset by all manner of real difficulties, as discussed in the previous chapter, they must not only hold the fort and appear to be teaching in the classroom as capably as ever, for their own peace of mind, but also advance the cause of the profession in the eyes of the rest of society. Relentless advance is in the nature of the institutions of the technocratic society. Thus professionalism is a key element in the understanding of teacher activity, and I found this well illustrated at Lowfield in the case of school reports. As the process of subject choice epitomizes the process and structure of school in their relation to society, so reports reveal the nature and degree of teacher professionalism. Reports constitute the pronouncements of the experts, their assessment of the

material measured against standard aims, and their diagnoses of remedy of improvement. Like doctors' diagnoses, there is something irrefragably incontrovertible about them.

Few are in a position to argue with them. But an analysis of the process and factors surrounding the reports, before and after their constitution, exposes their professional rather than absolute, basis. Teachers are not 'surviving' in this activity, but in a sense they are putting on just as big an act. Again, I should state that I am not castigating teachers for bad faith or wilful deception. Indeed as 'persons', they appear to recognize these ironies, as we shall see in the next chapter. But as teachers, they are part of the cogs and wheels of the system. Reports give us a good blue-print of its workings.

School Reports

Teachers' categorization systems have become a prominent subject for study recently. (Keddie, 1971; Hargreaves, 1977; Nash, 1973 and 1976). It might be claimed that nowhere are they so clearly evident and so succinctly crystallized as in school reports. These are the documents periodically completed by teachers, usually at the end of a term, and sent to parents, ostensibly to report on 'progress'. A commonsense view regards them as a kind of objective measure of performance. Grades, usually from 'A' to 'E' or 'F', increase the appearance of objectivity and the notion of an absolute standard, with comments offering a key to the relationship between the grade and the individual's perceived ability, aptitude and attitude. Of all these

factors, the last is usually regarded as the only variable and hence invites most comment, especially if at all deviationary.

Reports, of course, are a step removed from the action. We might take it that a great deal of that is socially constructed. (Young, 1971). That is to say that much teaching does not take the form of transmitting absolute, objective bundles of knowledge to children and measuring the success of that operation by some universally recognized standards; but rather is predicated upon principles of selection and socialization. This can be easily verified by reference to the reports of an entire year group at Lowfield. The report of pupils in the 'D' stream as 'C' 'Satisfactory' or 'B' 'Good', for example, has greatly different implications than the same comments made on pupils in the 'A' stream. The two just are not comparable, yet they masquerade, particularly with the classificatory grade, as a universally standardized form of measurement. In fact they measure against different standards and are decided by different criteria.

'Parents have little idea about their kid's capabilities. There are several anomalies, for instance; a kid who gets Bs in a lower stream might be, probably is, weaker than one in a higher who gets a C. Parents are deceived. They don't know the grade is class specific. Then there's the case of a kid who starts off well, then deteriorates at the end of the second and in the third year, and the comments get more critical as well. Quite often all that means is the teacher getting the wind up as option time approaches.'

(Alan Groves)

Figure 9 A typical report

REPORT FORM

(Signatures of teachers and other details,
such as number in form, absences etc.,
omitted)

NAME: ADRIAN SHARPE

Form 2C

<u>Spring 1973</u>			<u>Summer, 1973</u>		
	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Remarks</u>		<u>Grade</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
English	D	Every effort required.	D		Must work harder.
Mathematics	D	Great drop lately. Seems to lack will power to improve.	B		Improved
Science	-		C		Good progress recently.
Practical:					
Woodwork	C	More effort.	B		Very good.
Metalwork	C	Fair	B		Good progress
French	C	Drop this term.	C		Improved
History	B	Improved	C		Marginal
Geography	C	Only just.	C		Not enough effort.
Art	A	Works well.	A		Very good.
Craft (pottery)	-		B		Works very well.
Music	C	Enthusiastic	B		Works well.
R.I.		Satisfactory			A much better attitude.
Games		Works hard.			Good

Form teacher: Needs to improve a great deal in his attitude towards work. Behaviour also.

Has improved slightly this term, but still room for more, especially English.

Headteacher:

Typically, reports contain two indications relating on the one hand to the acquisition of skills and on the other to what kind of social person the pupil is becoming. They involve a notion of 'the ideal' but there are different ideal pupils according to (a) school aims (cf contest and sponsorship systems, grammar and secondary modern schools), (b) teacher ideology (cf 'black paper traditionals' and 'libertarian').

Teacher Typifications

Consider these two lists:-

<u>Desirable</u>	<u>Undesirable</u>
Concentration	Easily distracted, lacks concentration
Quiet	Chatterbox
Industrious (works well)	Lazy
Willing, co-operative	Unco-operative
Responsible, mature	Immature
Courteous	Bad-mannered
Cheerful	Sullen
Obedient	Disobedient

These are typical categories derived from study of comments on reports of two senior year groups at Lowfield. They bear out Hargreaves' conclusion that teachers rate pupils according to their conformity to their instructional and disciplinary expectations.

'The teacher defines the situation in terms of his own roles and goals, especially as they relate to his instructional and

disciplinary objectives, and assigns to the pupils roles and goals that are congruent with his own. He selectively perceives and interprets pupil behaviour in the light of his definition of the situation. On the basis of further interaction with the pupils and separated perceptions of them, he develops a conception of individual pupils (and classes) who are evaluated, categorized and labelled according to the degree to which they support his definition of the situation. He then responds to pupils in the light of these evaluative labels.'

(Hargreaves, 1972, p.161)

In a later work, Hargreaves and his colleagues elaborate a more complex theory of teacher typing. (Hargreaves et al, 1975). It is proposed that there are three stages - 'speculation', when the teacher first comes to know about or meet the pupil; 'elaboration', wherein the teacher tests out his first impressions, verifies or revises his opinions; and the third, 'stabilization', at which point the teacher 'has a relatively clear and stable conception of the identity of the pupils.' (p.143).

Now this appears to be at variance with the schema suggested by Keddie. She distinguishes between 'educationist' and 'teacher' contexts. In the former, their views are more influenced by theory, and by ideals; the latter is their world of practical action. There may be a big disjunction between the two. For example, Keddie holds that in the teacher context:

'What a teacher "knows" about pupils derives from the organizational device of banding or streaming, which in turn derives from the dominant organizing category of that which

counts as ability. The "normal" characteristics... of a pupil are those which are imputed to his band or stream as a whole. A pupil who is perceived as atypical is perceived in relation to the norm for the stream: "She's bright for a B" (teacher H); or in relation to the norm for another group: "They're as good as Bs" (teacher J of three hardworking pupils in his C stream group). This knowledge of what pupils are like is often at odds with the image of pupils the same teachers may hold as educationists, since it derives from streaming whose validity the educationist denies.'

(Keddie, 1971, p.139)

In some ways, this is quite compatible with Hargreaves' formulation, inasmuch as 'the pupils' educational identity is established in terms of the expectations the teacher has of him.' (Hargreaves et al, 1975, p.154). But with Keddie, the expectations rest upon stereotypes, and to understand how these are constructed, we need to examine the relationship between the social distribution of power and the distribution of knowledge. There is no such implication in Hargreaves' work. In fact, the impetus of his thought on the matter takes him further and further into the actual process of typification, which increasingly emphasizes the uniqueness of each individual, and elaborates the process. There is nothing wrong with this, indeed it is a necessary task, except that ultimately one is running a risk of reductionism. That is to say that actions and typifications are likely to be explained in their own terms, when a more powerful explanation lies elsewhere. There might also be an overrepresentation of complexity and rationality.

In a more recent paper, Hargreaves seeks to show that a great deal of work on typifications has been static and stylised based on either a 'characteristics' or an 'ideal-matching' model; and that what we need is a more dynamic model of typification, which takes note of its fluctuating, emerging, processual nature, and which acknowledges the importance of different contexts. (Hargreaves, 1977). There is some truth in this. On the other hand, it does pull away from another task, which is to identify the nature and common themes of typifications, and thence their sources and recipes for action. A great deal of the work which Hargreaves characterises as static, I take to be involved in this task.

It follows that, theoretically, there is not necessarily a difference between these two areas. Hargreaves' theory of typing might hold for those who come to know a lot about some, Keddie's for those who know a little about most. The Hargreaves' model puts the pupil first, and involves a careful and complex compilation of evidence about that pupil, received from the pupil, before 'stabilization' of views. Keddie's would put the knowledge first - i.e. the typifications or stereotypes, and follow a process of 'identification' i.e. relating cues from the pupil to those typifications. There might be very few of these, piecemeal and fortuitous, which might be regarded as 'reinforcement' rather than 'elaboration'. 'Stabilization' can thus occur on the basis of extremely speculative data, and with many pupils it might not occur at all.

Such a process of rather rapid identification with rather crude stereotypes is typical of institutional, functionary life. Sudnow describes such categorization in a county hospital emergency ward - 'The successful daily management of "dying" and "dead" bodies seemed to require that patients have a relatively constant character as social types.' (Sudnow, 1971, p.231). As long as they were elderly, poor and morally proper, their 'dying' fell within the established routines of 'death care'. These routines are 'built up to afford mass treatments on an efficiency basis, to obtain "experience", avoid dirty work, and maximize the possibilities that the intern will manage to get some sleep.' (Ibid). On occasions, however, the routine was disturbed, when for example a successful middle-class person was brought in, and special measures were instituted; and especially when children died, which can lead to loss of self-control. Morally reprehensible characters such as 'suicides' or 'drunks' also attracted a 'special frame of interpretation' around the way care was organized and altered the institutional routine in significant ways.

The parallels with teaching are quite striking. Teaching routines are developed for the very same reasons 'to afford mass treatments on an efficiency basis' etc. And the daily management of hundreds of children requires them to have fairly 'constant characters as social types'. As long as they are normal, conforming, or non-disruptive, their typification is a straightforward and institutionalized matter. The mechanics of it are to do with picking up, and

identifying 'cues' from the pupil and relating them to the stereotypes. Occasionally, however, these teaching routines are disturbed by 'special cases', usually because they are of uncommon excellence or an uncommon nuisance; also teachers independently, for idiosyncratic reasons, might form special associations with certain pupils.

These are relatively very few in number though they might take up a disproportionate amount of teachers' time. It is for these atypical pupils that Hargreaves' dynamic model of typification would appear more appropriate; and indeed for all relations of close, personal association; even perhaps for certain schools, where the teacher-pupil ratio is low, or where other special circumstances prevail, such as exceptionally close integration with the general community; also, for exceptional teachers; perhaps, too, for some primary schools where the custom is for one teacher to teach only one form. But in the majority, especially among state secondary schools, the static, stereotypical model appears quite appropriate. This is borne out in this particular study.

It holds, too, in American schools. Lortie reports that 'the people work of teaching is carried on under special circumstances.' The teacher's attempts to shape children are 'continually constrained by the fact of "classness". Teachers do not establish entirely distinct and separate working contracts with each student - they establish general rules for class conduct and find it necessary to discipline deviation from these rules... the claims of "individual

instruction" must be seen in light of these fundamental constraints.' (Lortie, 1975, p.137-8). These ideal models, therefore, together with the instances and causes of deviations from them, are in cases like Lowfield, more appropriate subjects for study as bases of teacher action than idealist and paradigmatic investigations.

An example of teacher typification

I had many talks with teachers about their pupils. Here is a typical example of one such talk. I was interested in a particular class at the time, and this teacher had been their form teacher the previous year, and thus, I reasoned, had grounds for knowing more about them than most. I asked him what he could tell me about them as individuals assuming that what I read about them on their reports was very abbreviated and possibly not the whole truth anyway. Thus the discussion was set deliberately to open up the typification world of the teacher, acting in his professional capacity. He had in front of him a form list, and this was his reply, as recorded on tape:-

Tony Bowyer - very disappointing. I noticed a decline last year and I spoke to him about it, and he's a right lout, isn't he? Always shuffling around with his hands in his pockets, instead of being a nice young man, as he was, but he's far from...This boy, John Cosin, he's got more introverted as time's gone on. He hasn't much to offer, but...now this little chap, Falding, he's alive and quite a promising

little lad. No comment about Floxton, he's a reasonable lad. Now this one I understand has some problems at home. I don't think he's malicious or anything, but his manners and courtesy are less than you'd expect. Nice chap, Hedges, and this boy (Keele) and this one (Lewis), and him (Lane). I got on well with Moore, though he had a bit of trouble - a bit of petty theft, you know. This boy (Muswell) is very poor but a very nice little kid, but he's illiterate of course, but he's helpful, he'd do anything for you. I got on with him very well, very, very well, different from some of these illiterates - behind your back merchants, aren't they? This boy (Royle) - an unusual boy, I got on very well with him, though some didn't...and...I like that boy (Rudd)...has some family troubles, I don't know what the family history is, they haven't the benefit of a father at the moment, whether he's died, or whether they have matrimonial troubles I don't know. Soanes is all right, no trouble. Now they (Stewart) have trouble - the father told me, and he's a very nice little lad, John, when you get to know him. He always has a lot to say - very proud of his mother, who I think has left the family. Nice little lad, Keith. These people are all right...Stephen Woodcock a very mature boy.

Now the girls I don't know so much about. Sandra, she's a pleasant girl. This one (Dianne) is very pleasant, not much ability but pleasant. Shirley is very difficult to get through to, always reserved, doesn't say much, a bit sullen. Judy Mershaw, a lovely girl this. This girl's (Angela Mancroft) a nice girl now who's broken away from Dianne. Rebecca's a nice girl, she gets asthma and is away a lot, she's in real trouble there. This girl's (Geraldine Pitt) a very nice girl, not much ability I'm afraid; and here again, Pat - nice girl, she's a trier, she got involved with a bit of shop-lifting, but I think she's sorted it out. A livewire this one (Kerry), always in trouble, on report, particularly with others, and I must say she's never worked very well, but she's a happy disposition.

I then pressed the teacher to elaborate on certain individuals in certain respects, but though qualifications and extensions were introduced, no further categories of thought were revealed. Now I am not suggesting this represents his total knowledge of these pupils by any means, nor that he always thinks on these terms, nor that these thoughts form the basis of his action in the classroom. What it does point to, however, is his differential knowledge of pupils, the categories he chooses to think of

them in, in the professional context, and his confessed ignorance of some.

Looking at his comments on the boys, there are two polarities offered:- 1) 'Introverted', 'not much to offer', against 'alive' and 'quite promising', and 2) 'helpful', 'very nice kid' etc. against other illiterates who are 'behind your back merchants'. He talks about all of them in terms of their disposition to school primarily, and his relationship with them. Within this chosen arena of discourse he emphasizes his ideals, which show a commitment to the traditional image. Of all the boys, Rudd came closest to it. He was the only one who, in interview, emphasized the ultimate object of gaining as many and as good examination passes as possible, in order to get a good job. But if you had some hope, this was the first criterion, you 'had something to offer'. If you had not, another quality is called on - 'likeability' or 'niceness'. Some are 'nice', 'reasonable', 'mature', 'helpful' as opposed to others who are teetering on the brink of subversion. He chooses to inject some comments about home background, but again these follow a stereotypical pattern along the criterion of broken home equals disturbed child.

With regard to the girls, he admitted he knew little about them, and his remarks were mainly limited to a vague, affective category of 'nice' or 'pleasant'. Again one girl, Judy Kershaw, aspired closer to the ideal than the others - 'a lovely girl, this' (his emphasis) but the others were

mostly converging around the median of niceness, except for Shirley and Kerry who are offending the norm in some way, but Kerry at least has a 'happy disposition'.

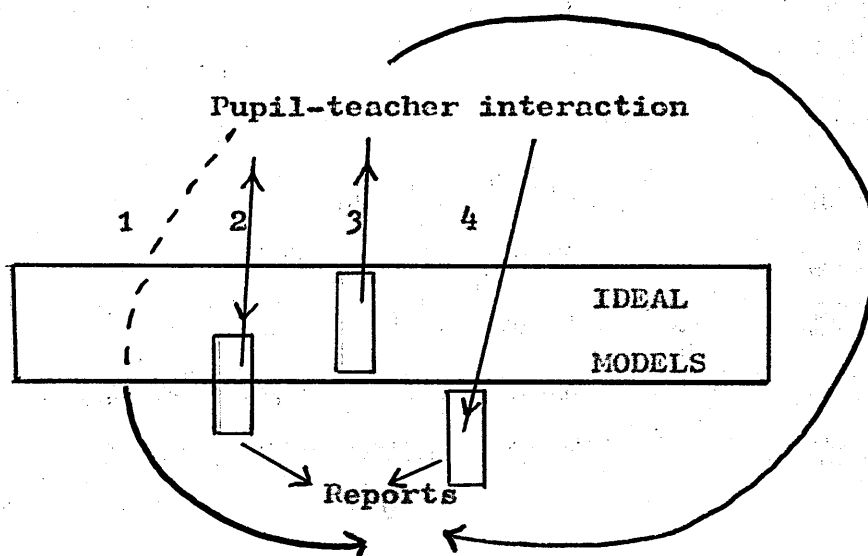
It would be a mistake to make too much of this example, but it does illustrate the terms in which teachers discuss children in their (i.e. the teachers') own confidential arena as one professional to another. It highlights one or two of the 'cues' which teachers look for to 'identify' the pupil ('illiteracy', 'broken home', 'niceness'), and the categories that emerge ('struggler', 'disappointing', 'promising', 'good relationship'). It also suggests stability - some firm judgements are made, at least about the boys, and some predominant typifications that suggest consistency from one context to another ('a right lout, isn't he?', 'very nice', 'very difficult to get through to'), a very strong affective area, focussing on his 'feelings' for them; and a certain vagueness about some, especially the girls. This is with a group of children that he knows better than any other. In no sense is this intended as an evaluation of this teacher personally; it is common among his colleagues, and in other schools, and indeed other professional areas, as Sudnow has demonstrated in hospitals, and is a commentary rather on the functional relationship between teacher and pupil. It is contributing to what I have called the static, stereotypical mode of teacher typifying which lies behind most teacher judgements of pupils when considering them in mass, which includes when writing reports. (Of course, when considering them as

individuals, unassociated with their colleagues and dissociated from pupil status, a more complex typification structure might be brought into play, but that does not concern us here. Opportunities, and time for that at Lowfield, were few).

Reports as typifications once removed

Many teachers' typifications are, thus stereotyped. Reports are even more stylised. For a start, they are a stage removed from the action. They result from the teacher 'reflecting' on the pupil in his absence, not constructing views about him in actual interaction with him. Of course he will have his actuarial records - mark book - but the context of his thought and cue-identification is different. If the former - of direct teacher-pupil interaction - is the 'classroom context', the latter is 'the staffroom'. There, the teacher's pull towards norms distinguished chiefly by professionalism, is stronger, and so is the influence of ideal-types. Figure 10 illustrates some possible routes between interaction and reports.

Figure 10 Routes between classroom interaction and reports



Note: Small rectangles represent teacher personal frameworks. Large rectangle represents ideal models.

Route 1 The teacher has 'taught' the pupil and has to write a report on him, but there is no data, no cues, and therefore nothing for him to process.

Route 2 These do involve teacher processing. The extent to which they are influenced by ideal models varies of course, as does the direction of influence.

Route 3 Personal framework totally embodied in ideal models, and the typification begins there.

Route 4 Not at all influenced by ideal models. Personal and individual interpretation. Highly idiosyncratic in our system.

In classroom teaching, as we saw in Chapters 6 and 9, teacher and class establish norms of procedure by negotiation. This is a complex procedure which takes time. There is 'give and take' on both sides, as each feels out the other for maximization of their aims. The teacher might have to lower his standards to get any work out of his pupils at all. He might have to revise his notions of 'proper conduct' in the light of new cultural experiences. The whole thrust of his teaching in this 'teacher' context might alter under

constraints to, for example, survival, as I discussed in Chapter 9. Reports do not reflect this classroom reality, but revert to the public official image of aims and standards. There is no concession to classroom negotiation.

In fact, reports implicitly deny it, building up a commentary on the pupil and a record of his achievement judged by absolute, 'educationist' standards. Where the official aims and standards are capable of manipulation, as with non-examination forms, there is more room for manoeuvre. Here the pragmatic, survival element is nearer the surface at all times. Broad aims allow teachers greater personal definition, but even here 'ideal models' still very much hold in relation to social development, as I shall show later.

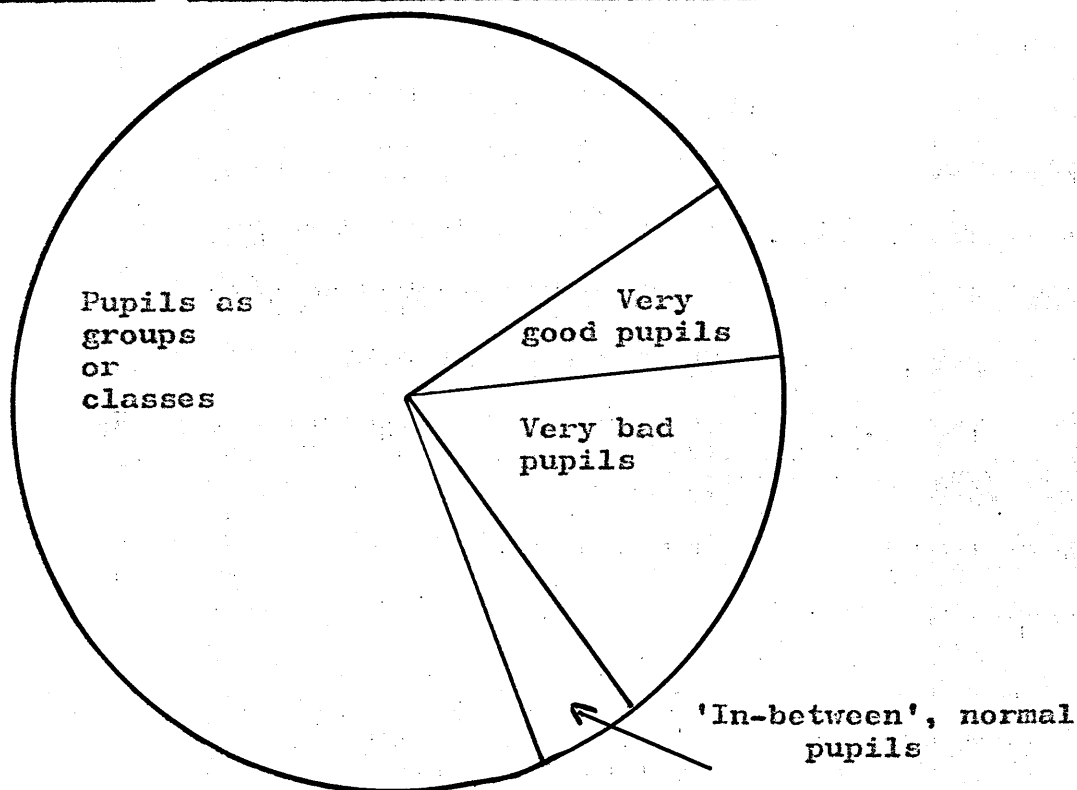
This demotion of the negotiative aspects and the supremacy of the educationist context and ideal models when making reports increases the chances of their inaccuracy. In making absolute judgements by formal criteria on standardized issues, reports are heavily weighted against individuals, not only in their 'individuality', but also in other areas. For example, it is well known that some pupils who show no ability at school, do show considerable ability in other circumstances; and that some pupils who are 'badly behaved' at school, might be very well behaved elsewhere. Thus in reporting on pupils' institutionally produced behaviour as if it were a decontextualized, genetic product, reports are adding to the accumulation of official information on individuals which goes towards providing them with an official identity. It

might be highly stylised, and as a comment on inherent ability, qualities and dispositions, a misrepresentation of an individual's potential. The question is, how far does it, with all the other 'feedback', become the truth. (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968).

Constraints operating on the construction of reports

Not only are reports a stage removed from the action, but they are circumscribed by very severe constraints, which also effect their nature and content. Figure 11 illustrates the distribution of a typical teacher's time and energies on his pupils.

Figure 11 Distribution of teachers' time



Most time is spent on pupils in groups or classes, with quite a lot going on very good or very bad pupils individually. Only a small proportion of time is spent individually on the

'in-between' pupils - yet these represent the vast majority, perhaps 95% of the total pupil population. As Lortie notes,

'although there are dyadic contacts, a simple bit of arithmetic discloses that teachers can hardly spend more than a few minutes with each child in the course of a working day. Most of their teaching behaviour, therefore, must be addressed to groups of children.'

(Lortie, 1975, p.152)

Much of their efforts, therefore, go to establishing and maintaining working rules for class activity; they 'groove' the students into regular patterns of joint action. (Smith and Geoffrey, 1968). The physical and temporal conditions are also very delimiting. At report time, the teacher is faced with writing perhaps 3-400 reports on pupils, 75% of whom he has limited knowledge of. He is given a very small space in which to write his comment, and a limited time, usually not more than two weeks. He is invariably extra fatigued while doing it, the task usually coming at the end of term, and he having to carry his usual workload while doing it. It is not surprising that there are a large number of 'neutral' comments such as 'fair'; 'satisfactory'; 'not bad', or the seemingly infinite number of combinations of them such as 'fairly satisfactory'; 'quite good at times'; and the one that intrigues me the most - 'very fair'. (Is this better, or worse than 'fair'?)

It might be claimed that after all, this is only a reflection of what has been and what is - most people are 'satisfactory' and even 'very fair'. This, however, in the

light of the present argument, would be the wrong way of putting it. They would have to be regarded as 'satisfactory' or 'average' by that teacher's present standards and criteria. If he has a class that contains extreme groups which occupy most of his time, a neutral comment might simply indicate that the pupil concerned is not in one of these groups. 'Satisfactory' then, can have a number of very different meanings. Here are some of them:-

1. Is producing work and/or behaviour quite up to my, his or the school's standard.
2. Does not impinge on my consciousness.
3. Is neither very good nor very bad.
4. Is in the middle of the boat with regard to this particular group (as opposed to more universal criteria).
5. The comment is intended to be as meaningless as possible, for any one of a number of reasons (e.g. lack of time, energy, knowledge or hope).
6. Projects image of a 'succeeding' or 'coping' teacher - i.e. deliberately intended to reflect on teacher rather than a pupil.
7. A palliative to troublesome parents or pupils.

A range of meanings could be inferred for any stylised comment. Take the 'not good enough', 'could do better' line. This could mean, among other things:-

1. Is not up to standard.
2. Impinges adversely on the teacher's consciousness.
3. Is verging towards the 'bad' end of the spectrum.

4. Is good enough, but the pupil needs to think he is not, possibly as a motivation device.

5. His work reaches the required standard, but behaviour does not match the ideal model.

The reference to hidden reservations of ability is a kind of bait to lure them into conformity.

In addition to pressures arising basically from inadequate resources, there are others of a socio-political nature. One teacher, whose opinion I sought on the usefulness of reports as message conveyors, said 'It would be all right if you could say what you thought, like "your little Ronnie wants a damn good kick up the backside."' In similar vein, a parent made the observation that they were 'good if not doctored', and 'that you had to be prepared to read between the lines'. A teacher-parent, who came to see me on a parents' evening once, about his son, greeted me with 'Now come on, cut the cackle, I know what it's all about, tell me how Trevor really is getting on.' In their different ways, these comments indicate some kind of filter or smokescreen through which teacher views are intentionally passed. What is its nature, and why is it there?

First, some examples of 'cackle' and its possible misinterpretation:-

<u>Report given</u>	<u>Possible Preferred Report by Teacher</u>	<u>Possible Parental Interpretation</u>
Quite fair	Plain and undistinguished	Good

<u>Report given</u>	<u>Possible Preferred Report by Teacher</u>	<u>Possible Parental Interpretation</u>
Needs to work hard) Unintelligent and/	The subject is difficult
Finds the subject difficult) or lacks other necessary personal qualities	
Easily distracted) Prefers the pointless	Is misled by others in class
Lacks concentration) unproductive, dislocating mucking about with peers, to listening to my pearls of wisdom	
Well-mannered	Is no trouble (often academically weak)	Good

Why do teachers not say what they feel on reports? Why do they qualify their statements? It might be supposed that it is a normal feature of human intercourse to pull one's punches, and not tell people to their faces what you think of them, or their children. We might, with profit, analyse reports through exchange theory, or game theory. For the moment, however, let us note that reports are not only written for parents. They are also written for the headmaster, and through him for their employers, the L.E.A., the governing body, and the parental body as a whole. The headmaster, and/or his deputies, screens all reports, and usually countersigns them. Sometimes he adds a comment, though not often, for if a teacher has hundred of reports to do, he might have thousands. He supervises standards, even sometimes specifying type of pen and ink to be used, and correcting for spelling and style. Above all, however, he ensures conformity to the classic ideals, and that nobody oversteps the mark.

Reports are also written for one's colleagues. They are passed around for completion, and comments are open for all to see. This can have both a restraining, and channelling effect. One is unlikely to exceed the bounds of professional discretion as often tempted to do; then, as comments accumulate on reports, there is the danger that one might be influenced by what is already recorded, especially if the pupil concerned is for this teacher one of the 'faceless mass in the middle'. This process is similar to the one that goes on in staffroom discussions of pupils and the affixing of labels.

Functions of Reports

If report comments are so inaccurate or variable as descriptions, other functions are suggested.

1. Professionalism

This can be seen at work in various ways. It might be thought that parents receive reports as a right, and that they are given as a 'service'. However, the tone and organization of reports, and the way in which they are administered, make it clear that the balance of power is in the other direction. Teachers choose the content, define what counts as skills and social behaviour, and arbitrate on standards. That is the basis of their professional expertise, and parents do not have access to it. At Lowfield, they were often reminded of their powerlessness and 'ignorance' more pointedly, by for example, the headmaster correcting parents' spelling mistakes on notes they had submitted to him on parents' evenings. Most

parents, therefore, are not in a position to contest, or even doubt teacher comments on reports. In this sense, reports have a strong political function, helping to sustain the impression of the subordinate role of parents and the professional image of the 'expert' pontificating without possibility of error; adding to the air of mystery about the content and expertise of teaching and 'the way school works'; integrating the staff in the common endeavour while separating out parents individually, yet seeking to enlist them in the reinforcement of their own power.

Reports occupy an important strategic position at the juncture of public and private spheres. Reports are similar in position and effect to institutionalized psychology (with which they are sometimes infused):-

'In the private sphere, it appears as one of the agencies supplying a population of anxious consumers with a variety of services for the construction, maintenance and repair of identities. In the public sphere, it lends itself with equal success to the different economic and political bureaucracies of social control.'

(Berger, 1965)

By reaching into the private sphere, and appealing to factors which parents hold most dear - their children's life-chances - reports help lever parents into support of teachers' professional image in the public arena. Thus, like psychologism again, reports furnish 'the scientific legitimation of both inter- and intra-personal manipulation.'

Thus, within the general bureaucratic framework of school, reports, though ostensibly for parents' and pupils' benefit, help insulate and protect teachers and, indeed, reinforce their power, and help cultivate the impression of detachment and omniscience, such as is attributed to the professions.

Again, there are interesting parallels with the medical profession. Friedson has observed how doctors protect themselves as a profession (against the emotional and intellectual demands of clients) by the use of 'avoidance techniques' (avoiding scenes and confrontations), and by control over access to information. They also protect their own self-image. 'Many institutionalized practices have developed to protect professionals...from unpleasant scenes...but also to cushion involvement with their own identity feelings.' (Friedson, 1972). Thus they develop ways of resisting notions of professional failure that might arise, for instance, in cases of terminal cancer. SL are the 'terminal cancer' patients of school. The best practical treatment is to make them as 'comfortable' as possible until they leave. But while this goes on, the professional image and the individual's self-identity must be maintained. There is no public, and very little private suggestion of the possibility that the teachers might have 'failed' SL, or even that SL and their kind present problems which they cannot, and ought not to be expected, to solve. The pole position of absolute standards and teacher infallibility is immutable, and the pupils are measured, unilaterally, against this.

Professionalism is another reason why punches are pulled in reports. Doctors do not tell patients that their case is 'hopeless' and their treatment 'useless' for that is an admission of professional failure. Similarly, teachers might use such terms among themselves in the privacy of the staffroom, but not in the public arena, of which reports are a part. There the general tone is one of hopeful urgency, and the content consists of shorthand diagnosis of the pupil's mental and behavioural health and prescriptions for success. That is what is expected from professionals, not admissions of perplexity, bewilderment, failure, weakness, frustration or resignation, which often is the actual case, as with Lortie's teachers:-

'...A seemingly simple question on problems of evaluating progress unleashed a torrent of feeling and frustration; one finds self-blame, a sense of inadequacy, the bitter taste of failure, anger at the students, despair, and other dark emotions. The freedom to assess one's own work is no occasion for joy; the conscience remains unsatisfied as ambiguity, uncertainty, and little apparent change impede the flow of reassurance. Teaching demands, it seems, the capacity to work for protracted periods without sure knowledge that one is having any positive effect on students. Some find it difficult to maintain their self-esteem.'

(Lortie, 1975, p.144)

Clearly, it would not do to convey this impression to parents.

2. Assessment and Distribution

Winter has suggested that reports might not be intended to help the pupil, but as assessment, to help fix the pupils' position in the division of labour. (1976). Thus he

thinks they are addressed primarily not to parents, but to the educational bureaucracy, providing information on how far the pupil is likely to be successful, and how much trouble he is likely to cause. They help fix his 'market value' both in the eyes of parents and of the educational bureaucrats.

Garfinkel's analysis of clinic folders supports this argument. (1974). The items in the folders are 'tokens', he says, 'gathered together to permit a clinic member to formulate a relationship between patient and clinic as a normal course of clinic affairs.' That is to say they are serving the uses of contract rather than description - for whatever purposes they want to put it to.

At Lowfield, this bureaucratic element was clearly evident, though I have no evidence to show if and how reports were used, as documents, in the assessment mechanism, or if they were related to private and confidential files. They seemed to be completed and regarded with immediate intent.

3. Advertising ideal models and recruiting parents

Teachers clearly assume the right to make decisions about what kind of person to aim to produce and also assume that this is generally acknowledged. Reports reflect the school's twin aims of providing skills and social training.

An indication of the extent of the latter is given by a content analysis of six girls' schools reports from 5L.

Having studied all the 4th and 5th year reports, I decided that these were the main items occurring:-

- A - Character and personality
- B - Ability
- C - Behaviour and attitude
- D - Standard and rate of work

Figure 12 Distribution of comments on reports

This is how comments were distributed among the six girls, whose reports were selected at random.

Pupil	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	Totals
1. A	0	0	0	1	1
B	4	8	9	0	21
C	11	22	13	18	64
D	1	2	5	10	18
2. A	0	3	0	0	3
B	1	2	3	6	12
C	14	12	12	13	51
D	16	21	21	12	70
3. A	0	2	0	0	2
B	8	7	0	4	19
C	19	21	20	11	71
D	7	5	13	6	31
4. A	2	2	3	0	7
B	6	3	3	2	14
C	15	22	15	11	63
D	4	10	13	12	39

(Continued)

Pupil	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	Totals
5. A	0	0	2	2	4
B	3	3	2	2	10
C	21	21	14	13	69
D	10	11	10	9	40
6. A	0	2	2	0	4
B	10	10	8	3	31
C	17	22	18	17	74
D	5	3	6	8	22
All A					21
B					107
C					392
D					220

This clearly shows the predominance of behaviour/attitude comments in all six cases. There are relatively few judgements on innate characteristics of personality or ability (these items occur more frequently on 'good' reports - as 'good' points and kind matters of congratulation and reward). There are more comments on standards of work, but except for one case, still many fewer than behaviour/attitude. There are not a higher proportion of bad points. I suggest that is indicative of the greater weight attached to this function - training for social relations (as compared with the other main function-skills), associated with this non-examination form, especially in the

context of their known inclinations to deviance. I had no time to make a similar analysis of top-form pupils, but I would hypothesize that their behaviour/attitude is less of an issue. It can be taken for granted that pupils are readily assimilating all the cues relating to their future dispositions in society, leaving teachers freer to concentrate on the provision of skills. We would expect, therefore, comments in the 'D' category to increase and 'C' to decrease. Since teachers are more disposed to being congratulatory than condemnatory (as a motivational principle), we would also expect a higher proportion of comments in the 'A' and 'B' categories. Pupils are congratulated for obedience, willingness, good manners, industry, application, consistency, neatness, good sense, and 'maturity' is reckoned by these criteria. An idea of the nature of these models is given by the following examples -

'A much better report. It would appear that Diane has taken some of last term's comments to heart. A much more mature attitude this term with obvious results. I really feel she must be congratulated as she has come a way. Please keep these standards up.'

(Form teacher's comment on 4th year girl.)

The most vivid examples I came across were those relating to the 'ladylike' image required of girl pupils.

'Apart from French and Music, Sara's report is below standard for a 3rd year 2nd stream pupil. Her slovenly ways, moodiness and inelegant

speech are reflected in her work.'

'She is a cheerful girl who is rather boisterous, at times too much so. We must, in this final year, try to turn her into a quieter young lady.'

'Tends to make her presence heard forcibly and often uses rather strong language. I feel that if she can be made to see that this is not the behaviour we expect from young ladies it will be to her advantage.'

The above example (on Sara) is rather unusual in its forthrightness. I came across very few of these, and took them to be indications of despair. This suggests another function of reports - as an avenue for release of tension, even perhaps 'revenge'. Usually, however, comments are always nicely controlled, as in the other two examples. Too strong a statement can lead to opposition and resentment on the part of the parent, who might then support the pupil in counter-institutional activities. Better to work for their co-operation. To this end, they are recruited into the motivational game. One of the things that impresses when reading through hundreds of reports is the atmosphere of urgency that they create. 'Time is running out...', 'There is an enormous wastage of potential and opportunities', 'There will be serious consequences', 'It will be for the individual's benefit', 'Her life's career depends on it...'. These usually coupled with phrases of personal loss and

regret.

Seeking further elaboration of the ideal models, I did more content analysis on the reports of the non-examination forms in years 4 and 5 (4L and 5L). This study revealed the following list of 'blame' categories that teachers impute for pupils' failure to conform. As Berger and Kellner have shown, the pervasiveness of psychological models encourages these attributes being seen as inherent characteristics of individuals, whereas they are really products of social interaction. (1964). I give some actual examples with each:-

a) Peer group

This puts the blame for failure to reach required standards of work and behaviour on the activities of others, and the weakness of the individual in not resisting the temptation to join them. Implicit is the recognition of the individual's particular potential to reach the grade if he can only sever the connection. We must, therefore, rally to shore up the weakness.

On reports, this will feature as 'got into a bad crowd', 'is easily distracted', 'too busy mucking about with her mates.' Other examples:-

'She must avoid inclusion in the pranks of her friends and thus inviting trouble.'

'Must make more effort and spend less time fooling around with her friends.'

Peer groups need not be nonconformist to be a nuisance -

'Shows little desire to get down to hard work
but relies on help from those around her.'

b) Immaturity (or 'irresponsibility' or 'lack of sense')

Like many of these blame categories, this is simply a euphemism for non-conformity. It contributes to a model of progressive socialization into the school's norms. One's maturity is then judged according to position along this scale. Thus it can be retrogressive.

'Thelma must really take a much more mature attitude to her work. Time is running out for her. Next year is absolutely crucial to her.'

(This also conveys the typical sense of urgency in some reports).

'Susan's attitude to work is not sufficiently serious. Until she learns to concentrate and adopt a more responsible attitude to homework, her progress will be very slow.'

'Kerry has been immature this term.'

'Would do well to mend her ways and get down to some sensible thinking and work for her own well-being.'

'Jean is becoming increasingly immature by comparison with the rest of the form.'

'Very immature. Has not yet shown ability or desire to work for his own benefit.'

c) Laziness

This is very common. Again, it is often imputed as an inherent quality, but it is a similar laziness to that imputed to the thousands of unemployed by the 1834 Poor Law Commissioners. They were unemployed because they were 'lazy and didn't want to find work' - the economic system and provision of jobs were faultless.

Pupils, therefore, are 'lazy' in relation to the goals and means specified by the school. Thus 'laziness' is also a euphemism for non-conformity.

'Thoroughly lazy. Must learn to behave properly and let others get on with their work.'

'William is definitely lazy.'

'Far too fond of hiding away from anything approaching real mental effort.'

'This girl is basically lazy.'

'Has no idea of what work means.'

'He does not enjoy work and has constantly to be pushed to achieve anything. Too nonchalant.'

'Thoroughly lazy. Obtaining homework from her is like getting blood from a stone.'

'A very dilatory child.'

'Idle and pestilential.'

'She must learn that chance is no substitute
for work.'

d) Lack of ability

These comments either suggest a 'total' deficiency, i.e. the pupil is lacking an essential mental component necessary for adequate performance; or compartmentalise, i.e. draw a distinction between 'academic' or 'scholarly' mentality, and 'native wit'. Thus we often get the merry yokel picture:-

'Despite limited capability, John tries cheerfully.'

'An extremely low standard, not due to any lack of effort, simply to a complete lack of ability at the subject.'

'He has made an effort this year but his innate ability is very low.'

'Carol has found the work beyond her capabilities.'

'Work hampered by slow thinking and nervousness.'

'Quiet pupil who would do well to get down to some real reading and writing so as to improve his pretty low capabilities.'

e) Lack of other personal qualities

'Diane needs more confidence in herself and a determination to improve.'

'She is rather a timid pupil.'

'Incapable of concentrating on any subject for very long. Must realise there is a need for greater effort to improve even when the interest is lacking.'

'Needs more drive about her.'

'Still capable but lacks drive.'

'She cannot be trusted to work without constant watch.'

'She does not work at all willingly and is not prepared to concentrate sufficiently.'

'Greater care and application needed. Dreadfully untidy at times.'

'Far too ready to accept low standards of work.'

'Must learn to control her giggling fits.'

'Complete lack of initiative and effort.'

'Slap-dash attitude with little pride.'

Thus one can come unstuck if one lacks confidence, courage, concentration, effort, drive, trustworthiness, care, application, ambition, control, initiative, pride. By the same token, possession of deplorable attributes can lead to problems -

f) Possession of deplorable attributes

'An annoying silliness has crept into her whole attitude.'

'So often a thorough nuisance because of her persistent chattering.'

'A little too quiet in the class.'

'Far too inclined to be ill-disciplined, noisy and rude, and in class she is simply being lazy. Next term she must pull herself together and work before it is too late.'

'Tends to make her presence heard forcibly and often uses rather strong language.'

'Her slovenly ways, moodiness and inelegant speech are reflected in her work.'

'Susan will be much pleasanter when she ceases to show off and when she realises that she has an awful lot to learn. She'd do well to start before it's too late.'

'Lazy and impertinent.'

'Amiable but plodding.'

'Far too emotional. More mature approach needed.'

It will not pay off then to cultivate silliness, chattering, quietness, loudness, rudeness, strong language, moodiness,

exhibitionism, impertinence, slowness, emotion. These are, of course, all cultural products, though they are often presented as individual attributes. How far is the perpetual reinforcement of this kind of definition self-fulfilling, so that they become individual attributes?

g) The technicalities and mysteries of the subject, especially in conjunction with some of the above, and occasionally the desperate efforts of the teacher. This is operating, of course, in the interests of professionalism.

'The language of Maths is incomprehensible to this pupil in spite of a hard slogging year to explain.'

'He finds the work difficult.'

In such ways are the ideal models exposed and highlighted, the pupils' weaknesses in relation to them pinpointed, parents wooed for their potential to motivate their children, and the cause of the profession secured and advanced.

Reports as Cultural Products

I want to show here a) the inaccuracy of some comments and implications made about pupil ability and the misleading timbre of some comments on attitude and work, and b) where some aspects of behaviour are more or less correctly described, that they are an institutional product rather than an inherent quality of the individual.

a) In a staffroom discussion I asked some teachers how they

defined the 'ability' in pupils they so often talked about. It revolved around three factors - 1) powers of expression, extensive vocabulary; 2) powers of analysis and discrimination, and ability to grasp ideas; 3) flair and imagination.

Labov has illustrated vividly how apparently unable and inarticulate children can undergo a metamorphosis in a different context. (1969). As one 5L boy told me, 'Why worry around school, we just slouch around. Of course, we wouldn't if we were anywhere important.' In this instance the 'metamorphosis' might be present within the same context, but either simply pass unrecognised, or be lacking some other unstated or unrecognised quality. In the following interview extracts, I suggest that all the above properties are clearly evident, yet they come from a pupil of low school achievement and low 'ability'. There are other admired qualities evident too - the ability to take the role of the other, tolerance, patience, humour, intellectual curiosity - and 'maturity':-

P.Woods : The teachers might say they planned interesting lessons for you. Did you ever think that, at the beginning of the year for instance?

Shirley : Well, when we started at the beginning of the year, I thought well, here we go again, we've got the same old lessons and same routine, but I can see from their point of view it's a hard job for them to find good lessons for us to do, that they think we'll enjoy, I mean I can

understand they got to have a lot of patience to sort it out and take us on (laughs).

P.Woods : Don't you have any interesting lessons?

Shirley : Yeah, we have some; there's two, there's Social Studies, that's with Mr. James, and that's like dealing with the outside world. And there's Environmental Studies with Mr. Potter, and there we're surveying the old time village of Bourne and Turkersville and the surrounding area. That's good that is, 'cos we use those old paper documents which are the school's and we get the information of them.

P.Woods : If you could make your own timetable, what would you put in it?

Shirley : Well, I'd put Social Studies first, I'd have all morning at that if I could; and Careers, 'cos we can learn more about different jobs and how to get 'em and what passes you need for them. I'd put those two first. Then I'd probably put English and Maths...because some of us need 'em for jobs that we're doing, but I don't really need it because I haven't got no passes, I don't need any...

P.Woods : (In a discussion about Games). Do you try to get out of it if you can?

Shirley : Well, sometimes I feel I don't want to do it, that's not very often now, 'cos I've got used to getting into it, but some weeks I think, 'Games! Ugh! What a rotten thought!', and I

try an' forget me kit, something like that, always end up taking it. But if I do do it when I don't want, I always sit there and mope about (laughs).

P.Woods : Can you get out of doing it?

Shirley : Well, if you wanna get out of it you've either got to 'ave a note from your parents or you either got to 'ave something 'appened to you at school that they know about, or keep moaning at 'em until they tell you to go away.

P.Woods : Any other dislikes?

Shirley : Oh! no, the timetable's not all that bad considering what you 'ave to do. I know we've got to do it and there's nothing that we can do about it to say we can't really. Only way we can get out of it is by 'aving the day off or something. If you 'ave it off like that you probably get found out and then you're for it...

(Talking about teachers in general)

P.Woods : What makes them more acceptable to you?

Shirley : I suppose it's the different ways in which they go about their subject, you know. One teacher you can bring in fun with the lesson, at other times you can just sit there and be bored stiff and get fed up and start moaning and complaining and mucking about, but...it's like last year we 'ad Music, this year we don't have it 'cos we was always complaining, all we ever done was sit there and listen to records. I mean that was boring for us, 'e never used to let us sing...

Mr. James, he's very understandin', I get on all right with him, because last October I was away two weeks when my father died, an' you know when I went back to school he says if ever I 'ad problems or my Mum 'ad any problems, come and see 'im and 'e'd sit and listen to you, all afternoon he'd sit and listen...Some of the teachers have had more experience in teaching to children than what the others 'ave an' they know sort of the general routine, 'ow to talk to the children, and 'ow to get on with 'em more than the others do...some can talk to you quite harshly you know, an' be all nasty and bitter to you, yet you can turn round to another teacher an' he'll be ever so nice to you, much better you know.

Not all her teachers were blind to Shirley's qualities. A content analysis of her reports during her five years at the school revealed the following main distributions:-

<u>Type of Comment</u>	<u>Number</u>
Good ability	11
Poor behaviour/attitude	31
Good behaviour/attitude	30
Good work	27
Variable work	37

In some ways, however, this is misleading, for Shirley, like the vast majority of her colleagues in 5L, had been

consigned to the bottom stream in the school on entry, and had stayed there, coming through eventually to the non-examination form. The criteria for ability and work differ in that route from the mainstream, examination route, and can largely be collapsed into 'conformity'. This is born out by the distribution of comments over the years, those for poor behaviour and variable work steadily increasing as Shirley progressed through the school, especially from the end of the third year onwards - the point at which the two routes formally separated. However, what the above interview shows is that, at the peak of her non-conformity, Shirley is displaying several eminently desirable qualities in the school's own terms, very readily and naturally, while being represented by some teachers as 'slovenly', using 'inelegant speech', which is 'reflected' in her work, 'loud', 'unladylike' and 'below standard'. One tactic is to recognise the ability but accord it a lower status. The headmaster told me, 'It's a sort of intelligence, a native wit and cunning, an ability to look after oneself in life, what I call "life-preservation wit".' Thus the intelligence is demoted to accord with the pupils' structural position in school, and in society. (Squibb, 1973). The press of such attitudes and reactions, and the determinism of the streaming fix her school identity, part of which is 'non-examination', that is incapable of passing any examinations. It becomes possible then to speak of her as 'good' for a non-examination pupil. But the interview shows she is good by any standards. Indeed her powers of application, expression and analysis - the key elements of

general pupil ability in the teachers' view - and, one might add, depth of insight and understanding, were the equal of any pupil in the school.

b) Reports, where they accurately describe behaviour, make no concessions to the heavy contextualizing of that behaviour, nor to the interaction that produced it. Behaviour and attitudes are reported as naturally emergent, in a manner appropriate to social Darwinism as if the child is visited with original sin and is not responding to treatment. In fact, much of this behaviour is a reaction - a reaction to the teacher, or some other institutional element. To understand it better, we need to know, therefore, what it is a reaction to, and we must go to the pupils for this.

The following comments illustrate their differential reaction to different teachers, in terms used of them in their reports.

Example 1

- Erica : You know she talks to us like real people
(Joy: Yeah, like her children)
- Yvonne : As if we're grown up, she doesn't treat us like kids any more.
- Erica : She makes you feel more older, more mature when she starts talking, don't she?
- Joy : You can talk to her about anything.
- Yvonne : I think she enjoys our lessons as well.

Example 2

David : Some teachers, like Mr. Jones, treat you like little children. Gives you work, makes you copy off the board.

Kate : Yeah, then he gives you the answers!

David : He treats you like you were a little primary school kid.

P.Woods : How do you prefer to be treated?

David : Them what treat you like an individual. If I'm treated like an individual, I always work a bit better in those lessons. They always treat you as little kids.

Example 3

Jackie : It's all right for juniors to 'ave uniform, but when you get to our age, I mean, I've got a Saturday job, an' you know, one week you're at school, the next week you're at work, you know, treatin' you like little children.

Fiona : I reckon if they treat you like children, we'll act like children - we'll muck about, an' if they treat us like grown-ups we'll act like grown-ups. It all depends on how they treat us.

Example 4

Amanda : He's all right, 'cos you know where you stand with him, 'cos if he's in a bad mood, you know you've got to behave, but if he's in a good

mood, he won't do anything, you can go up to him and tell him jokes.

Jane : And speak back to him.

Penny : Do anything with that bloke!

Example 5

Deborah : He's all right, I suppose. If you have any problems 'e'll sit there an' listen to you. Sometimes he'll turn right nasty. He can be nice one day, and nasty the next, all depends how he feels.

Example 6

(In a discussion on a boy who was expelled from school.)

Valerie : He swore at Mr. Barney.

P.Woods : That's a good start!

Valerie : He didn't care, he just came out with any language he wanted to. He talked to all the teachers how he wanted.

Judith : But with Mr. Town, he'd be as right as rain, yeah, funny that was, he seemed to like Mr. Town.

These examples, in illustrating that typifications and reports are a product of interaction, remind us of some important facts attending that interaction. Firstly, that teachers are human. They are not amorphous, bloodless, robot-like people-processing professionals, as they appear on reports and other public and official documents,

ceremonials and displays. They are subject to moods, whims, disabilities, misjudgements and temper. These essentially private characteristics invade the public sphere, when they affect teacher-pupil interaction and judgements made on the basis of it. This is one area where teachers differ profoundly from other professionals like doctors or lawyers. The nature of the work of the latter allows them more easily to separate the public and private arenas. Secondly, for the most part, teachers deal with pupils in groups. In any individual interaction, the pupil is allocated a group persona, which might be far removed from any individual's view of him or herself. Hence David's plea in Example 2 to be treated as an individual. But teachers who have the time and flair for this, as in Example 1, are very rare. Contrarily enough, however, the language of reports is highly personalised. Some of the comments, if made of a fellow adult, would be distinctly libellous. Thirdly, it is quite clear that pupils differ between contexts, between teacher and teacher, lesson to lesson, and school and home. These three basic contradictions in the teacher-pupil relationship are under- or misrepresented in reports.

The models of behaviour encouraged by the school are assumed to have universal validity and regard. Any deviation or mismatch is regarded as deviant, and not as an alternative. However, as the following interview extract makes clear, there are very strong, rich, complete and admired alternative models available, and these are deeply embedded in children's background culture. Since it is the one in

which they have been reared and the one in which they will spend their lives (happily, for it has developed in reaction to the nature, conditions and environment of their work), they naturally see attempts to change it as attacks from the enemy.

(In a discussion on reports, and references therein to 'ladylike behaviour')

Yvonne : I don't think they're...Well, it seems stupid to me...We're women...I don't care what anyone says.

P.Woods : What do you think they mean by 'ladylike'?

Yvonne : Someone that goes around stinking of perfume, 'aving 'er 'air up, and wearin' little earrings.

Dianne : Rather like Miss Bramble (Deputy Head).

Yvonne : Yeah, spittin' image of Miss Bramble.

Dianne : That's what she's trying to get us to be like you know, trying to get us to be like her.
But that's one thing I could never do, because ever since I've been five I've been climbing trees, climbing on top of garages at the back 'ere - you can climb up trees and swing over on to the back of the garages. I don't think I could ever adjust to the way Miss Bramble...
Oh, no!

Yvonne : We play football, don't we?

Dianne : Oh, yeah, we like our game of footy in the dinner hour. Knocked old Jordan's hat off 'cos 'e took my matches away, so I said,

'Right! I'll have your hat!'

P.Woods : Presumably Miss Bramble wouldn't think that very ladylike?

Dianne : No, she wouldn't! (Laughs)

Yvonne : I hate anyone that's snobbish. There's this girl, she was ever so big-headed and one day she said to me, 'I don't know why you don't come to school in something decent for once', 'cos I used to go around in this little tank top and little skirt, trousers sometimes, an' she used to come in 'er skirt an' little 'andbag...She always used to obey teacher. She was their pet - used to make me sick.

P.Woods : Do they get on to you for the way you talk at all?

Yvonne : Oh, yeah, everyone moans at us for that.

Dianne : Not only swearing, but the way we talk. You know if we go up and say, 'Oh, yeah, all right, we'll do it' - they'll say, 'Oh, no, you don't say it like that', then they say it the right way, and you have to repeat it. But it doesn't make any difference, it's the way you've been brought up and the way you've spoken. You can't adjust really to the way everybody else is.

P.Woods : What about swearing, do they get on to you for that?

Yvonne : On and off, say, if we say it by accident, then they say, 'What did you say?' You 'ave

to say it back, and we say we're sorry.

P.Woods : Do you think it's wrong to swear?

Dianne : Some of the words, yeah. Some are worse than others. When I'm in a raging temper, I just come out with anything. I can't 'elp it, I'm like what me Dad was. 'E would...it weren't all that strong, but 'e'd come out with most things over and over again, and that's like me. It was Tuesday, wasn't it, I 'ad a go at Kate Maxwell, I was raging at her. I went bombing around the gym, oh, you should 'ave 'eard me!

This conversation is interesting for several reasons.

Firstly, Yvonne and Dianne's conception of the model in the image of the senior mistress, and their moral judgement on it - equally reprehensible to them as their model is to the senior mistress. This is clearly a culture clash, and not a question of socialization into a common citizenship, or adolescent waywardness on the path to maturity. (Mackay, 1973). Another interesting feature is how accurately this is diagnosed by Dianne, who seems to show more sociological awareness than the senior mistress. These girls, in fact, display a great deal of sophistication and social etiquette in this conversation. Though perfectly frank about their speech, behaviour and so on, they clearly have standards conducive to good social order (hatred of snobs, 'some' swear words are wrong, etc.), and are able to discourse freely with me on a kind of 'middle

ground'. For example, not once during three 2-hour long discussions with these girls did they use a 'swear word'. Where maturity, flexibility, adaptability, courtesy are concerned, they are very strong. Yet Dianne and Yvonne were two of those continually castigated for immaturity, rudeness, loudness and behaviour unbecoming to their sex.

Once more it seems that these qualities, professionally reported as observed characteristics of these girls, are in fact the product of two alien cultures impacting together, or the 'defence' of one against the threatened inroads of the other. They are not qualities inherent in the girls' biological or psychological make-up, or integral to their background culture, but institutionally produced in the attempt to 'reform' them.

Another example of a teacher imputing his own values on to pupils, came when I was discussing a 4th form miscreant, Tim Bewley, with Harry Timpson.

'You can never win an argument with Tim Bewley. He'll never back down, whereas Stephen Jones will. Steve will think, 'Oh, I'm not going to win this one, it'll suit me better, make an easier passage if I give way.' Tim Bewley will never give way. He's also gutless, have you noticed? He'll make a great show, make a lot of noise and splutter, but he's as weak as dishwater inside. A cricket ball came to him yesterday along the ground - and he got out of

the way, whereas little Kevin Harris, a little lad with glasses, a third of his size, was breaking his neck to stop it. I slipped him the other day - one of the women had complained about him - and he argued, saying, 'I wasn't the only one!' I countered that with, 'I know you weren't the only one.' He was aghast at that, he expected a different retort. I didn't give him the old story about this hurting me more than it hurts you. I said, 'Come on, it's a fair cop!' - that's what I expected of him, having been caught, an acknowledgement of it, - 'Take your punishment, then it's over, I'm not going to carry on about it.' But he went on, protesting away, he wasn't going to have it. No, he's a right coward, Tim Bewley.'

An alternative explanation is that the compliant boys mentioned more readily accept the cultural norms of the teacher, or possibly are better or more willing colonisers. Whereas Tim Bewley, something of an intransigent, remains more faithful to his background culture, which regards all authority and establishment men with suspicion, and demands a constantly vigilant and aggressive attitude towards them, with a touch of 'never surrender'. To admit the validity of Harry Timpson's 'fair cop' would have required him to turn his back on the criteria of survival and respect within his own culture. His persistence then, was an act

of courage and loyalty, not cowardice. As the likelihood of such polar opposite explanations of aspects of teacher-pupil relationships increases, so does the credibility of 'conflict' and 'dominance' interpretations of school.

The enormous power the teachers have over the pupils enables them to define what counts as proper standards of work and behaviour; and to exercise completely different standards in their own dealings with pupils as they choose:-

Julie : I can remember once when I went to take my Maths book up to her, she marked it and I sat down, and she said, 'Come and collect your book, girl.' An' she just threw it at me, straight across the room, (others: 'Yeah, she's always doing that.') and tells you to go and pick it up. And if you go and ask her a question and you say, 'Please, Miss,' she'll say, 'It doesn't please me, so shut up and sit down.' She told me off once and I wet myself, I was so frightened that was in the first years - I was so scared. She still gives me the jumps every time I see her.

Clearly, various standards of 'courtesy' are operating. Again 'conformity' seems to be the teacher's aim, and group conflict, complete with contempt, hostility, fear and hatred, the basic factor.

The following comments help to contextualize the categories of 'lazy' and 'unco-operative':-

(In a discussion with some non-examination pupils about teachers and lessons)

Kathleen : It's because when we were in the second year, we were put in the lowest form, and from then on they didn't want to know.

Christine : It's made us more lazy, int it?

Kathleen : I mean it int doin' us no good is it? We might as well 'ave carried on with ordinary lessons.

Christine : They never give us anything interesting to do.

Leslie : My little brother could do what we're doing.

(In a discussion on attitude to work)

Brian : Not only that, we're not just as brainy, but we don't want to work like. If someone puts something on the blackboard and says we'll finish that tomorrow, we just rub it off, and when they come back, it's gone, so we don't do no work. An' all the form say, 'Go on, rub it off', none of them say, 'No, I wanna do it' - so, we're lazy.

Some elements of reports are meaningless, as stated above when discussing constraints operating on teachers.

(In a discussion about reports)

Philip : Well, some of them are stupid. Some can be fair. Some teachers - you don't 'ave 'em - and just put a silly remark in, an' I never 'ave 'er - really made me look a fool to me Mum.

Gary : I think they're stupid. Some comments teachers put down just don't make sense you know, they just put down work I haven't done, or just sort of says 'doesn't try' or something like that.

Philip : They're only concerned about those 5th years who are going to take exams, you know.

Gary : That's all they're concerned about.

Philip : They just give us work to pass our time away really.

One of the functions of reports mentioned was to describe a pupil's market value. Some are in no doubt about this and claim it does have an effect on them:-

(In a discussion on a lesson given by the head master)

Kevin : I sort of pretended I was listening to him. The trouble is we have to have him for our reference, to get jobs with, he's our head master.

Jane : Yeah, that's right.

Kevin : I'm being fairly well behaved at this school. I've got to be good in some ways just to get

a good report. At my last school I would have got a terrible report. I wouldn't have got a job in a prison.

So, quite calculatedly, Kevin is deferential towards the head master because he knows he holds the passport to a good job. The head master, in turn, equally as calculatedly, uses the threat of bad reports and references to secure good order in his school.

Of course, not all teachers have conflictual or insidious motives, conscious or unconscious, nor are all perceived as having them. Some pupils do perceive criteria which they accept as having universal validity.

P.Woods : Do you think teachers try to change people?

Ken : Do you mean the way they behave? Yeah, most teachers do. They try to make you look smart, bring you up as hard-working as they can. What they're really trying to do is make you accept the fact that when you leave school you've got to work.

In summary, pupils' own speech reveals very clearly exactly those criteria of ability and attitude, of maturity, courtesy, responsibility and humour that some teachers accuse them of lacking. This again points to the inaccuracy of reports as description. They confound the teacher's human and professional reactions, his typification of the pupil by group and by individual, and

they collapse several contexts into one. Much deviant behaviour is not the aberrant response of wayward pupils to an educative process, but the defensive counter-thrusts of a complete, fully-integrated and self-sufficient culture under attack from an alien culture. There may be strands common to both cultures which equip them to discourse on a middle ground, and most teachers are concerned to cultivate those; but in some cases, teacher behaviour seems simply an instinctive hostile reaction to the norms and values of an alien group. In those cases it seems more appropriate to speak of 'war' than 'education'.

If the analysis were to end here, it would have been better to have forgotten about reports, and to have based the discussion in the broader context of teacher-pupil interaction in the classroom. But reports are written for parents, and they have an impact on the schooling process. We have discussed their purposes and their inadequacies. We must now consider their reception. How do parents 'fill in' the sense of reports?

The Reception of Reports

The passage of compulsory school legislation in England

'finally signalled the triumph of public over private influences as formative in social life and individual development; in particular, it tardily recognised the obsolescence of the educative family, its inadequacy in modern society in child care and training.'

(Musgrove, 1960, p.377)

Not only has the family lost its educative function.

Technocracy has deprived the lay person of his power of judgement in the public sphere.

'No longer can each person make his or her own contribution to the constant renewal of society. Recourse to better knowledge produced by science not only voids personal decisions of the power to contribute to an ongoing historical and social process, it also destroys the rules of evidence by which experience is traditionally shared. The knowledge-consumer depends on getting packaged programs funnelled into him.'

(Illich, 1973)

Both these developments are well signalled in this study.

Indeed reports are 'packaged programs' compiled by the 'scientific - professional'. However, they relate to an area where it is difficult, if not impossible, for people to achieve intellectual and emotional distance. 'To the parents, the child is a special prized person; to the teacher, he is one member of the category "student".'

(Waller, 1932, p.61) Again, reports invade a private area with a public message through a public mechanism.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, they can lead to conflict and distress. The different frameworks through which reports pass might be summarised thus:-

<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Parent</u>
Universalistic	Particularistic
Institutional	Family
Professional	Amateur
Impersonal	Personal

This is not to forget the adulteration of the teacher's framework by more 'private' factors. For the purposes of analysing parental response, the above framework holds. We have seen these clearly illustrated in the matter of subject choice. Naturally, when reading a report, a parent reads it as a report on his child, not on a group of children. Because of his ignorance of the internal mechanics of the system, he will accept the cues to objective criteria that are given. He will, for example, interpret 'satisfactory' as meaning that his child is meeting those criteria comfortably, though not brilliantly. The other nuances connected with the term as discussed earlier, will not occur to him.

Behind these teacher-parent frameworks are class-cultural frameworks, again as discussed in Chapter 4. These permit some parents to effect the bridge between public and private more easily than others; while some parents experience the same kind of cultural assault on them, as did their children.

'Teachers can be very sarcastic and big-headed you know. At the parents' evening, Mr. Henry made me feel quite small. "You know she gossips a lot, Mrs. Overberry." Mr. Fountain made me feel right guilty, as if it was all my fault she was no good at Maths. Mr. Taylor also made me feel small, running on about her behaviour, how she never listens and so on. My God, I felt I was back at school myself.

I went to try and find something out, and came away with my tail right between my legs.'

(Wife of Foreman)

'No, we didn't go to the last parents' evening. When we go, we get such rotten comments, "does not listen", "does not pay attention", and so on, it has a depressing effect on both pupils and parents. A little encouragement would work wonders.'

(Estate Agent)

The latter comment from a solidly middle-class representative shows that teachers do not discriminate consciously between classes. Middle-class deviants get similar treatment - the lines are not as neatly drawn as all that. The following comments show what a mystical experience reports are for some parents:-

'We don't know how good he is, I mean, teachers have more idea of his ability.'

(Council Worker)

'I don't really feel competent to advise Stephen because of my own lack of education. I can't appreciate fully what's at stake. I was going to take his exam report to a second teacher outside school to get an independent verdict.'

(Fireman)

'We have a good hard look at the (reports). Sometimes it's really disheartening. You can't argue with what they say, because we don't see him at school. We've accepted them - sometimes they've told us things we've virtually known, like "lack of concentration". His teachers are the people who are in the know. We sometimes look at his books and shrink in horror at the red marks on them. But they're the ones who know his potential.'

(Police Officer)

'You have to accept what they say, it's the only thing you can do. I go through her books and so on, but I've no way of knowing if all the heavily corrected bits are "hard" and all the best bits "easy". We've no idea of the standard.'

(Factory Manager)

'This is my biggest grouse really. They bring you an appointment card, and I fixed up to see those teachers he's said he was bad at. They all told me how good he was. Then the report comes out and tells you all different.'

(Toolmaker)

The conflicts, hurt feelings and sense of helplessness and outrage that can result are vividly illustrated in some of the comments above, though usually teacher diplomacy, like the doctor's 'bedside manner', wins the day. This, however, is difficult to put over in a sterile 'report'. It is always done better in a face-to-face meeting, because in that situation one can say more, ask questions, explore possibilities, in short contextualize, modify, and seek the nature of any judgements that are being made. Besides, the balance of power is somewhat altered when parents enter the premises. Here is their opportunity to create an atmosphere of teacher accountability, break through the professional barrier and force consideration of their charges on an individual basis.

'Yes, I found the parents' evening very helpful. David had had a rotten report. The last one was the worst one he got. He got 'E' for Maths, and was 127/132. He got fed up with the homework early on. Well, I thought, is he going to do anything or not, so I went up the school, saw most of his teachers, and they were very reassuring on the whole, very helpful.'

(Petrol Pump Attendant)

The parent has to pad out his interpretation by whatever means are available to him.

'Reports are very stylised. They say the same things over and over again, and don't tell you

very much really. The children are our main source of information, and that, of course, is filtered. They only tell us what they want to tell us. I feel very cut off from the situation really.

(Wife of Lorry Driver)

Some claim more insight and a broader knowledge base:-

'Teachers can tell you what your child is capable of, but they don't know much about the outside world, so we try to match the two. As far as reports go, they can be very useful as long as they're dead true and not softened. You've got to be prepared to read between the lines a little. Then you weight this up with what you get from your own child as well. For example, Jones apparently always gives everybody 'C's, so you know if your child gets a C+ she's doing very well, and if she gets C- she's pretty poor. They give you some idea on how your child is progressing providing they're not doctored.'

(Works Manager - whose wife is a School Secretary)

This last would appear to be the ideal parent in a sense, putting it all together, being on top of the situation and in command of the information. But he was the only one I met in 60 interviews. In short, of those parents expressing positive and unprompted feelings about reports,

ten were left nonplussed by their apparent contradictions and often suspected inaccuracies; a further twelve were at a loss as to how to 'fill in' reports to arrive at a meaningful understanding, and ended up frustrated and angry; four others remarked on the differential power element between teachers and parents; four more said that the reports on their children coincided with their own views, and thus experienced no problems in 'filling in', since the information was already present in their own knowledge of child, school and 'outside' world to contextualise the report. These last five are solidly middle-class parents; the others overwhelmingly working-class (except for four, which includes the estate-agent mentioned above). Again, I would not wish to make too much of these distributions, or class connections - they are suggested, nothing more. The main point I wish to establish is the actual categories of response. These are summed up in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Parents' interpretation of Reports

<u>Mediatory frameworks</u> <u>Main elements</u>	<u>Kinds of understanding</u>	<u>Response</u>
Knowledge of system, and teacher frameworks	Diagnosis in complete context	Satisfactory
Acceptance of system, but little knowledge	Decontextualised diagnosis	Bewilderment frustration
Rejection of system	None	None
Personal knowledge of child	Child-loaded	<u>EITHER</u> Confusion and/or Contestation <u>OR</u> Satisfaction

Summary

Reports are not a sterile description of individuals. The views on which they are based are derived from a static stereotypical model of typification, which has been decontextualised to form 'master typifications', wherein the educationist context and ideal models are supreme, and classroom negotiation discounted. The constraints that teachers work under, both concerning resources and of a socio-political nature, further circumscribe reports. Their functions are seen as professionalism, assessment and distribution, advertising the ideal models, and the recruitment of parents as motivators. As to their content, reports are cultural products. Pupils represented as lacking ability, discourteous, troublesome, and lazy possess the desired characteristics as personal attributes, well evidenced in different contexts. Difficulty arises from the clash of alternative models embedded in alien cultures. The apparent simplicity of reports' comments is belied by the fact that it is a product of the messy interface where teacher-as-professional meets teacher-as-person, where child-as-pupil meets child-as-child, and where public institution meets private life. Few parents are equipped to unravel these intricacies and contextualise reports. This operates in the service of professionalism, though hardly in the interests of recruiting parents as motivators.

All this demonstrates what is by now a familiar axiom, that is that whatever we do, whatever judgements we make, whatever knowledge we come by, is firmly anchored in society.

Reports are not a purely cognitive affair, giving omniscient judgement on objective states by absolute criteria. Nor are they entirely, or even predominantly in many cases the result of the application of the current state of professional expertise and knowledge. They are particularly interesting sociologically because firstly, like subject choice, reports involve all three major parties in the educative process in interaction; and secondly, they invest a weak link in the system. Teachers have to commit themselves to public statements which reflect back on pupil-teacher interaction, refer to ideal models, and are addressed to third parties. They employ glosses which both disguise and contain heavily implicit references to how they perceive the relationship between those three parties, and to the functions of schooling.

We hear much these days of 'parental choice', 'community schools' (wherein parents have an integral place), the teacher acting 'in loco parentis' (in acknowledgement, seemingly, of parents' ultimate responsibility). In fact, parents appear to have little choice, part or responsibility in their children's education. This study suggests they are an adjunct to the system, of potential use as motivators in directions pointed to by the staff, for destination perceived by them, and in a manner defined by them. Even in America, where teachers are held to have less power, parents are seen by them in a similar light. Lortie's teachers thought "good parents" 'should not intervene' and 'should support the teacher's efforts'; and they reserved

the right to 'define occasions which justify parental involvement and does not legitimate parental concerns.' (Lortie, 1975, p.190). One might also note the classical role of P.T.A.s - as fund-raising bodies, and in no sense collaborators. This, of course, is in line with the development of the industrial society, the segregation of areas of activity and the division of labour. As Sockett attests, 'the most cursory review of legislation in the last 100 years may be regarded as a gradual erosion of the rights of the parents.' (1975). And as he notes, 'it is a paradoxical feature of the system that the older it gets, the more generations go through it and become "educated", the less the parents have any right to decide what goes on.' If, in some instances, parents seem to have been more in the formal operation of the school, frequently this can be interpreted as a move by the teachers to seek their aid in control. Masgrove and Taylor sought to show that teachers have become too powerful and unresponsive and inefficient. (1969). Most sinister among the school's recent attempts to invade the private area, they see as the introduction of school 'counsellors', a powerful indoctrination device which can operate against the influence of parents. Clearly, the tone of the reports examined here show that the teachers concerned readily assume that they have the right to pontificate on such matters, even to the degree of making some parents personally experience the effects of their comments. Thus some parents at least, far from being collaborators with teachers in the joint project of educating their children, are themselves objects of

scrutiny for appraisal and comment.

Musgrove and Taylor recommended that parents should be treated as the teachers' clients, introducing a contractual relationship. However, this would appear unrealistic. It ignores or underestimates, for a start, the consequences of that teacher power, amply demonstrated here in the case of reports, as professionalism. With each round of reports and parents evenings, the conditions of the teacher-parent relationship are further consolidated. But it is also out of gear with the prevailing model of society, which is an accumulation of trends and experiences and cannot be overturned by a simple act of will. The features of this society have been well described by Illich (1971), Marcuse (1962, 1964), Roszak (1962) and others.

'In the technocracy, nothing is any longer small or simple or readily apparent to the non-technical man. Instead, the scale and intricacy of all human activities - political, economic, cultural - transcends the competence of the amateurish citizen and inexorably demands the attention of specially trained experts. Further around this central core of experts who deal with large-scale public necessities, there grows up a circle of subsidiary experts who, battenning on the general social prestige of technical skill in the technocracy, assume authoritative influence over even the most seemingly personal aspects of life....In the technocracy, everything aspires to become purely technical, the subject of professional attention. The technocracy is, therefore, the regime of experts - or of those who can employ the experts.'

(Roszak, 1962, p.6-7)

Everybody to his trade, therefore, and to other trades
a recognition of their expertise and one's own ignorance.

'Within such a society, the citizen, confronted by bewildering bigness and complexity, finds it necessary to defer on all matters to those who know better. Indeed, it would be a violation of reason to do otherwise, since it is universally agreed that the prime goal of the society is to keep the productive apparatus turning over efficiently.'

(Roszak, 1962, p.7)

School reports are an expression of technocracy. They illustrate how technocratic man has superceded private man. We have seen how, in certain areas, the bartering and bargaining, the affective ties, the individual interest and compassion push through the institutional crust of ritual and routine and find expression, - for example in classroom interaction, in the staffroom, and in parent-pupil relationships. But there is a tension between this, and the mass, public, technocratic order which operates by a different mechanism, in accordance with different norms. The two do not sit happily together, as we have seen, from the teacher's point of view in his compilation of reports - in the constraints and restrictions, in a certain amount of hypocrisy, in the decontextualization; from the pupil's, in the inadmissibility of his own culture if it does not fit, his experience of the ensuing conflict, and his knowledge, firmly realised or merely sensed, of the underlying truth; and from the parents', in their bewilderment, confusion, ignorance, and sometimes, shame. Yet, if Winter is correct, school reports, and other

accounts like them, form the basis of the pupil's social identity or 'market value'. This would be likely to lead to further devaluation of the public sector of school and work, and increased elevation of an individual's private world, where he can cultivate a preferred identity. I shall expand on this later.

I have discussed the mechanics of teacher typifications. They are largely a function of the constraints teachers work under, the 'mass' nature of their raw material, and the need for routine. This facilitates, perhaps necessitates, the emergence of ideal models and the relation of individuals to them. But what governs the content of these ideal models? Where do they come from? They might be seen as part of the traditional role of compulsory schooling as an agency of social and political discipline, and of training the workforce for the technological society. The factory owners of the 19th century needed workers 'whose attendance was regular, who were punctual and who could work for long periods at a consistent speed; and these were precisely the qualities which, through long habit, the domestic workers lacked.' With the introduction of compulsory schooling in 1870, the first task was seen to be one of 'civilizing the masses'. Soon, the school took over from the church as the prime agency for direct moral instruction, 'a good example of the way in which schools were coming to be accepted as the automatic surrogate for any social institution which was functioning inadequately.' (Wardle, 1974, p.99).

These functions have stayed with the school, though now the emphasis is not so much on civilizing or controlling a barbaric populace as 'liberating' them to increase chances of personal advancement. Thus the principles that have served the successful over the years - those contained in the 'Protestant Ethic' - have come to be universally applied. Downes has summarised these into nine basic criteria:- the possession of ambition, the recognition of individual responsibility, the cultivation and possession of skills, worldly asceticism, rationality, the accentuation of manners, courtesy and personality, the control of physical and verbal aggression, the pursuit of "wholesome" recreation, and the respect for property.' (Downes, 1966, p.35).

All of these can be seen at work in the reports' comments reviewed earlier. The irony of the situation is that the best intentions of teachers are confounded by the strategies and cultures developed by the less privileged over the years as a response to the conditions in which they work and live, and to their position in the power structure. These cultures have become self-sufficient in their own right, resistant both to adversity, and to attempts to 'improve' them, which might be simply disguised attempts at subversion. They carry over into school, and operate there in the same way. (Willis, 1977).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

STAFFROOM HUMOUR

Sociological analyses of schools invariably leave an impression of grim institutionalization; and of teachers, one of either sinister conspirators in the service of the dominant groups in society or of judgemental dopes, innocently but naively unaware of what they are doing. Neither of these is the view I have formed of teachers, at least in as a simple a form as that; and that particular image of the school, as we have seen, is one-sided. As described in Chapters 4 and 9, a large amount of rhetoric pervades the teaching game. Many ingenious explanations are devised to provide accounts that square with the professional ethic and naturally enough, when interviewed on this plane by researchers, teachers answer in those terms with entire conviction. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, the reflective 'I' converses with several 'mes'. One takes the role of several others, including those of one's own self. Teachers, thus, for example, are well capable of analysing their 'surviving' and 'professional' selves. They do this in the 'backstage' region of the staffroom. There I discovered a great deal of awareness of the restrictions, ruses, shortcomings and subterfuges that make up teacher activity. This awareness posed a problem, namely how to resolve the great conflict and discrepancy between the appearance on the one hand, and the reality of the other. We have seen how the invention of rhetoric solves a problem of disjunction on the plane of professionalism. But where the disjunction arises as a result of the invasion of the professional by the personal plane, rhetoric is clearly highly inappropriate. The

panacea in this instance is laughter. As with the pupils, the incidence of laughter among the staff was so high and so intensive, that I judged it to be of considerable significance.

In this chapter, I examine the phenomenon of staffroom humour. First I look at the significance of its location - the staffroom - and its incidence. Then, to give some perspective to the examples that follow, I give a summary of sociological accounts of laughter and humour. The examples are arranged according to the main contexts that have been developed in these accounts. It will be seen that these are insufficient within the framework of my analysis to do justice to the essential properties of staffroom laughter. My alternative explanation which sees staffroom humour against a broader backcloth is discussed further in the final chapter. The key role played by laughter is supported by the conflicts that arise when its emergence is obstructed. I conclude the chapter, therefore, with a consideration of laughter-inhibitors.

The Staffroom - The Laughter Arena

It is important to grasp the physical and temporal properties of staff laughter. The main arena is the staffroom, the teachers' collective private area. Its privacy is well respected by headteachers and pupils alike. Pupils are often debarred from knocking on the door, or even approaching its vicinity, by 'out-of-bounds' corridors.

Headteachers usually knock before entering, limit their visits to urgent matters of business, and conduct themselves discreetly while there. Its boundaries are usually clearly demarcated. One I know, regarded as ideal by its inmates, was a cellar in an outbuilding, protected by ancient stone walls and two car parks, from the rest of the school. It was the 'men's' staffroom, and the strength of its boundaries was well indicated by the women's confessed trepidation at entering it. 'Solidarity' was here expressed in distance, construction, site and reinforced others' recognition of it. The 'properties' of the staffroom often lend it a distinctive character - perhaps old battered armchairs which the teachers who 'belong' to them defend with great vigour, resisting charitable urges from the headteacher to buy 'brand new ones'; or stained tea mugs, which carry the evidence of many a happy break - both symbols of individuality; and frequently, too, signs of vast disorder - masses of papers, books, journals strewn around flat areas - which contrasts strongly with the system and order outside. Above all the staffroom is characterised by a euphoric atmosphere, given off by the reactions of the people in it, whether they be smoking, doing crosswords, playing bridge, conversing, or just relaxing.

This is indeed a haven in stormy seas, and recourse must be had to it at regular intervals. The 'collective' periods are again well indicated. The initial gathering at the beginning of the day is a leisurely and tension-free

gathering, after which teachers register their forms, then go to Assembly. This is followed by a short, transient but often highly significant episode in the staffroom, before lessons begin in earnest. There is then a mid-morning break, of some twenty minutes, a lengthy dinner-hour, and a mid-afternoon break. Some often stay behind after school for an 'unwinding session'. In between these times, the staffroom is populated by one or two teachers enjoying 'free periods', but as these are used in preparatory work, or in marking, they are not our concern - the staffroom is being used on these occasions as a 'quiet area' in the service of the official work of the institution.

I want to say a little more now about functions of laughter as revealed in the literature, which I touched on in Chapter 7. All of these can be seen at work in staffroom humour, but also, as I hope to show, there is something more.

Functions of Laughter

Generally speaking, sociological work on humour and laughter has hung round two models, one featuring conflict, the other control. Conflict humour occurs in inter-group situations where one group expresses aggression or hostility towards another group through the medium of sarcasm, ridicule, irony, satire, invective, caricature, parody, burlesque, and so on. (Stephenson, 1951). The value of humour as a device is that, not only is it a socially acceptable form of expressing aggression (of

'being malicious with dignity'), and hence of great interest sociologically since it reveals strains not evident elsewhere, but also peculiarly efficacious as a weapon in boosting one's own morale and undermining the enemy's, even if this is assumed rather than a reality. (Obrdlik, 1942, p.570).

In the hierarchical and status-ridden structure of a school inter-personal conflict is endemic. It is frequently dispersed in humour. 'Status' is functional in this respect - it provides scapegoats, but protects its holders. Much of the pupil laughter featuring in Chapter 7 could be represented in conflict terms, especially 'subversive laughter'.

The 'control' functions of humour are to 'express approval or disapproval of social form and action, express common group sentiments, develop and perpetuate stereotypes, relieve awkward or tense situations and express collective sub rosa approbation of action not explicitly approved. (Stephenson, 1951, p.570). The 'control' function more properly operates through the sanctions of a group to enforce conformity to norms established by the group. Thus deviations from the norm might be punished by ridicule, or the norms themselves expressed through humour as part of the socialising of a new recruit. The particular 'collective' and 'sharing' quality of humour and laughter reinforces group solidarity and supports rhetorics like 'being one of the boys' and 'fitting in to the staffroom'.

One feature of this fitment is conformity with the ongoing informal traditions of the group which enable it to survive as a group, and one prominent aspect of this is often the 'joking relationship'. 'From the individual's point of view, a successful joke is a means of winning the social approval of the group, but in the very process of his seeking such approval the bonds of the group may be strengthened.' (Middleton and Moland, 1959, p.69).

Again, the reciprocal cementing function of humour is evident. At Lowfield, the deviations most frequently punished were, 1) stepping out of line professionally, especially attempts at exceeding the authority of one's status, 2) stepping out of line as a person, especially boasting, toadying or 'shopping', and 3) professional incompetence especially unawareness of the 'hidden pedagogy', even more so where this was associated with incongruity of status, i.e. high status and high level of incompetence. These embody the norms and values of the professional community, and those generally operative in middle-class society. Stephenson's analysis of jokes in anthologies of wit showed an adherence to a set of values regarded as the 'traditional American Creed'. This 'minimises the importance of economic differences, stresses the notion and value of equality, ridicules the concept of any basic conflicts, asserts the soundness of the American system, and emphasizes the virtues of charity, initiative and ambition. (Stephenson, 1951, p.574). An interesting study in English staffrooms would be to consider the extent to which these are 'mocked' in the hidden pedagogy of survival, for

example volunteering for extra work, losing one's 'sense of mission', 'jolly' the pupils along.

Another aspect of the 'order' function derives from the anthropological work of Radcliffe Brown (Bradney, 1957). Humour has a function of maintaining a satisfactory relationship between persons and parties who, as a result of their positions, social ties, and competition for favours and advancement, might be expected to feel some hostility toward each other, but who nonetheless have to carry on working together for the institution, and hence their place in it, to survive. Not only then might humour enhance solidarity, it can also evaporate conflict, jealousies, envy, even hatred.

There are many variations of the conflict-order models, which do not fit tidily into either. One variant is what we might call an 'order' function, whereby a subjected group, through humour come to accept the situation. Coser has shown how 'jocular griping' performs integrative functions for the social structure of the hospital ward, and how it helps to shape the behaviour of patients according to the expectations of doctors and nurses. Thus the patients themselves, through laughter, help to enforce the norms of the hospital community. (Coser, 1958). Like the pupils who transform the reality of the school in order to make it tolerable, these patients change the definition of the situation to make it acceptable as it is. Other variants are 'humour as compensation' and 'humour as release' themes.

The first is well expressed by Myrdal:-

'When people are up against great inconsistencies in their creed and behaviour which they cannot, or do not want to, account for rationally, humour is a way out. It gives a symbolic excuse for imperfections, a point to what would otherwise be ambiguous. It gives also a compensation to the sufferer. The understanding laugh' is an intuitive absolution between sinners and sometimes also between the sinner and his victim. The main "function" of the joke is thus to create a collective surreptitious approbation for something which cannot be approved explicitly because of moral inhibitions.'

(Myrdal, 1944, p.38-9)

It is a short jump from this to the defence of professional failure and inadequacy through humour among teachers. And it adds some complexity to the straight 'conflict' line. Take, for example, the great amount of 'ribbing' of pupils that goes on among teachers in staffrooms. Nearly always, such pupils are academic or behavioural failures. They present problems, academic and disciplinary, and might well be perceived as an opposing hostile group. Humour can then boost morale, injure the enemy, and also ascribe to them the implicit reasons for the strife.

Theories of laughter as 'release' stem from Freud. One variant is provided by Hayworth who suggested that laughter was originally a 'vocal signal to other members of the group that they might relax with safety.' He emphasizes its 'natural' qualities, and 'if laughing is not instinctive it is at least a conditioned response acquired early in life.' (1928, p.370). One might even go in

search of tension, for the sake of the subsequent relaxation. Laughter here is a kind of language, and 'by communicating the modd of gladness becomes of survival value in the social group.' (Patrick, 1966, p.383). But more than this, according to Hayworth, it is a signal that the supposed danger is passed.

Coser also refers to the safety-producing functions of laughter. Her hospital patients were subject to a high degree of insecurity and generalized anxiety, deriving from their physical condition, and the type of authority relation to which they were submitted. (1958, p.173). But their joking and laughter allowed them to cope. As Freud put it, 'It's meaning is "Look here!" This is all this seemingly dangerous world amounts to. Child's play, the very thing to jest about.' (1950, p.220). Joking can liberate, and lead to solidarity. The jocular gripe 'is peculiarly fit as a mechanism of adaptation to the hospital for it helps patients to regain their identity through collective triumph over their weakness, and at the same time to release their grudges in "substitute complaints".' (Coser, 1958, p.177).

To summarise, humour has been interpreted in terms of 1) conflict, as a weapon with which to strike at an enemy, or 2) control, as a device to establish norms, or 3) order, in the furtherance of social bonds, solidarity, intimacy, and accounting for failure and inadequacies, or 4) release, from tension and anxiety. I have felt this brief account

necessary because, while all might well be present in staffroom humour, as we shall see shortly from examples I came across in my research, I felt that none of them either singly or collectively, captured the essence of that particular kind of humour. First, as a reaction agent, there is insufficient emphasis on the structures and forms of organization this humour is reacting against, in this case the institutional forms and structure of the school; secondly, there is hardly any acknowledgement of laughter as a creative, growth experience. The two are related, since the first stimulates the second. It is its counterbalancing force.

George Simmel, for one, saw that many forms of human interaction contained far more than could be reduced to their mechanical functions or the sum of their various roles. It is essentially joyful and pleasurable.

'A superficial rationalism always looks for this richness among concrete contents only. Since it does not find it there, it dispenses with sociability as a shallow foolishness. Yet it cannot be without significance that in many, perhaps in all European languages "society" simply designates a sociable gathering. Certainly, the political, the economic purposive society of whatever description is a society. But only the "sociable society" is a society without qualifying adjectives. It is this, precisely because it represents the pure form that is raised above all contents such as characterise those more concrete societies. It gives us an abstract image in which all contents are dissolved in the mere play of form.'

(Simmel, 1964, p.122-3)

Interaction, therefore, can be intrinsically satisfying, over and above the instrumental gains that might be got from it, and indulged in for its sheer delight. It can involve fondness and affection, even when expressing conflict, and the former might, in fact, predominate. To reduce it to instrumental functions adulterates it. Because it does not lend itself easily to sociological analysis, it tends to get ignored, which is rather unfortunate for institutions like schools, many of which have a high incidence of such interaction. Also, it takes place mainly in 'off-periods' and in private areas, whether it be staffroom or playground. Perhaps that is why there are so few reports on these areas - they are 'off-periods' for researchers also.

Staffroom laughter

All of the previously mentioned functions of laughter are evidenced from time to time in the staffroom, together with the other, 'creative' element. To try to separate them out would be to abuse the essence of the humour. My impression was that some of the staff were as much on the lookout for laughs as the kids. 'You have to make a laugh of it', Harry Timpson told me after one uproarious session. Often it might have its origins in conflict, control, order, or some frustration, but equally as often it would seem to lose that initial referent, to which it was a reaction and become a growth experience in itself. The main social referent then would be the immediate company, the function, the delight and pleasure of sociation.

Conflict initiated humour frequently involves the attacking through laughter of attempted subversions of status by senior personnel combining excessive bureaucratic features, which themselves call for neutralization. It is not surprising, therefore, that much staffroom humour takes the form of mocking, embarrassment, or compromise of senior personnel often by 'subversive ironies'. In essence, this is no different from the pupils' 'subversive laughter' as discussed in Chapter 7. The teachers' oppressors, of course, are the headmaster and his deputies. Senior masters and deputy heads are marginal men, neither headmasters nor ordinary staff. They can fall either way. In this case the male deputy head identified strongly with the staff, and was never a laughter object. The headmaster and his deputy headmistress, however, who both had separate offices were both objects of derision. Hardly a break went by without 'Cheetah' and 'Flossie' being used as laughter symbols and, of course, as with the pupils, all their physical and psychological peculiarities were exploited to maximise the benefit. The head was a short, fairly thick set man, with certain ape-like characteristics - hence the nickname. He had been a pilot during the war, and was fond of recalling the experience. After one Assembly based on 'night raids', some teachers reduced him to size later in the staffroom:

'Did he ever really fly an aeroplane?'

'He wouldn't half have needed some cushions to sit on!'

'They wouldn't have been able to see him.'

'I reckon the Germans must have thought we'd got a new secret weapon - the pilotless plane.' (Laughs)

'Do you remember when he told the kids once that he'd bombed Brussels, and that kid asked, "But, Sir, weren't they on our side?"' (Laughter)

'Get out boy! Don't be so insolent!'

'He must have had a time taking parties to Germany.'

'I bombed over this area you know.' 'Oh, jah, indeed, I vas head of ze Flak, how do you do.' (Pretends to shake hands; Cheetah's hand gets crushed.)

'He's just about as big a hero as Tony Hancock's fighter ace. Do you remember how he put out a fire in his single engined plane by dropping his bombs in the sea and flying back through the spray?' (Much laughter)

This well illustrates the caricature technique of conflict humour. But there is a more general principle involved than the expression of aggression through humour, and the undermining of the moral position of the enemy in the context of the school and their relative positions and statuses within it. That is the celebration of a common

principle among people in general which calls for the deflation of a braggart. 'The humour in such situations is seen in the attempt to be something one is not or in trying to assume characteristics which one cannot have by virtue of his previous experience. These jokes thus function to express the value of being one's self, average, and "just like anybody else..." (Stephenson, 1951, p.572).

Ceremonies and rituals frequently seemed designed for the greater glory of the headmaster. He was extremely status conscious. And the more he tried to build up his image, the more the staff, particularly the 'wits', pulled it apart afterwards. Thus his fire drills were passed off and acted out as Nuremberg rallies, complete with the caretaker's wife being sent to the gas chamber for not clearing up the school yard properly (of course, when somebody told Barney that he could take his gas mask off, he replied he hadn't got one on!) And his hymn practice assemblies were similarly acted out as if the Palace of Varieties, or a Frankie Vaughan attempting, vainly, to conduct the Wembley multitude. Here is an extract from my notes of one such Assembly:-

Lester introduces the hymns, and talks about how the chaps on the football trains used to sing in 4 part harmony. Then he announces the first hymn, 'Allelujah, sing to Jesus'. Both Barney and Lester open their mouths wide and sing very loud indeed.

Allelujah, sing to Jesus
 His the sceptre, his the throne;
 Allelujah, his the triumph,
 His the victory alone.

The band also play very loud, but there is not much coming from the body of the hall. Barney comes round from behind the table to the front of the stage to inspire. Lester, who had been conducting the band, turned to face the Assembly, blasting them once more with the last lines of the verse.

Hark! the songs of peaceful Sion
 Thunder like a mighty flood;
 Jesus out of ev'ry nation,
 Hath redeemed us by his blood.

Barney stops the band with an imperious wave to the arm. 'The band is playing! Me and Mr. Lester are singing, with about twenty others in the hall, now come on, heads up, books up, fill your lungs with air and sing!' (Oh, Christ!' says the girl next to me). There is a pathetic noise, like a behind-the-hand mumble, for Barney and Lester, of course, are no longer singing. 'Now come on!' urges Barney, 'this is a damn good tune, some good words...' and he intones roundly the words of the next verse.

Allelujah, Allelujah

Glory be to God on high;

To the Father, and the Saviour,

Who has gained the victory...

'...now come on, sing up, sing up!' After this first hymn, Barney says, 'It's coming. It takes a lot out of you, doesn't it? It takes more out of you than a game of rugby. But if you want enjoyment you've got to pay for it. The more you put into it, the more you get out of it. Thank you, Mr. Lester.' Lester introduces the next hymn. He runs on about background, capabilities etc., philosophical stuff. The hymn is softer, more dulcet. 'Take My Life'. The band plays the introduction, then Barney interrupts. 'Now come on, heads up, books up, let's hear it!' After one verse, it was, 'Girls! Take My Voice'. But they were still unable to find theirs. After that verse it was, 'Without the band this time!' which yielded the most miserable noise of the morning, like one or two creaky doors opening and shutting. One girl later told me she actually started to sing, but they all stared at her so she stopped. 'Boys! Take My Silver, Take My Gold!' Oh, what a groaning!

The headmaster and music master achieved little in terms of their intentions during this hymn practice, despite formidable exertions. Teachers on the stage said they could see whole wedges of silent faces. And so, for the pupils, it was merely an extension of the usual bore. But it was an extremely important component of the teachers' day, a brilliant start in fact. I could see faces twitching as they sat at the back of the stage. And as soon as they reached the staffroom, Harry Timpson went into his Master of Ceremonies routine. 'For this verse, I give you your own, your very own, Flossie Sparks!'

'This time we'll have the boys, the girls, the band, but chiefly - yourselves!!!'

'Is there any truth in the rumour that he's practising for Wembley next year?'

'It's sing-a-long with Cheetah time folks.'

'He gets just about as much response.'

'When the band stops you can hear a pin drop, can't you?'

The staff went off happy to their lessons, and when they returned at break they immediately recaptured some of the early morning mirth... 'but chiefly yourselves!'

Mirth is compounded when the opposition falls out amongst itself, such as for example, when Barney rounded on Flossie.

Once she had altered arrangements for an Assembly because, it was rumoured, she didn't want to take it herself. At a subsequent staff meeting, Barney kept saying, 'Who changed it?' 'Yes, but who changed it??' Timpson said she tried to wriggle out of it, but only landed herself further in it. 'It was the first Monday, and the first Monday of the half term.' The staff were hugely amused to see them bickering - 'He can't stand her, can he? I was knocking round the office one day and he came storming out, 'Where the bloody hell is it?' he roared, and she had it, whatever it was.' They amused themselves during staff meetings by taking bets on what she would do first, this - rubbing her arms crosswise, or this - pulling her skirt down further over her knees.

The point about Flossie is that, whatever her incompetence and unsuitability as a teacher, she provided much merriment for the staff, as did Barney, which helped them through the day. This does not mean, of course, that it was an adequate substitute for competence, but it was a considerable consolation. During my time there, the amusement caused by her vastly outweighed the exasperation. The social role Flossie, and to some degree, Barney, are playing here is that of 'fool' rather than senior personnel in the hierarchy, making threatening onslaughts on to others' statuses.

'The fool is distinguished from the normal group member by a deviation in person or conduct which is regarded as

ludicrous and improper. He is usually defined as a person lacking in judgement, who behaves absurdly or stupidly.' (Klapp, 1949, p.157). The fool deviates from the normal in three main ways:- 1) an 'extreme exaggeration or deficiency', 2) an 'evidence of weakness or irresponsibility' and 3) 'an offence against propriety rather than against mores.' With regard to the first of these...the role of the fool involves a striking exhibition of some incongruity or shortcoming. With respect to the second, the role of the fool inherently involves failure, weakness or comic frustration. Because of his ineffectuality, the fool is regarded as incompetent and irresponsible. Despite his shortcomings, therefore, he is distinguished from the villain by the fact that his pranks involve no evil intent or are too stupid to be taken seriously. The fool is thus tolerated and is regarded with amusement rather than being punished.' (Klapp, 1949, p.158).

These incidents also quite clearly promote solidarity. With a large school staff there is always some regular turnover, and the input of new personnel unacquainted with these backroom legends and traditions offers an excuse for their regular recall. The spontaneous laughter of the initiates is shared by those familiar with the tales, even if they have rehearsed it a hundred times. The humour in the material is constant. The laughter is sparked off, and then spread, contagiously, and then frequently compounded by other tales.

'Do you remember the time John George announced in Assembly about the kids coming over from the hills? When you get to the gym, you must go straight on, you must not fork off to the dining room.'

The mental image of those kids 'forking off' to the dining room was another 'banker' among the staff's humour sessions. There would be input from others' experiences elsewhere, contributions heightening the individual's identification with the group. Laughter is an enormous aid to solidarity, and in the harshness of the conditions in which teachers work, it is important that they have this support. Group solidarity is often aided by demarcation from other groups, hence the persistence of such themes, as 'senior personnel' or 'the women's staffroom' (if indeed they are separate), or the 'kids', or other departments (such as 'the P.E. department'). The more ludicrous or ridiculous these can be made to appear, the better - hence the added spice in the examples above that were public announcements to very large audiences. But it would be quite wrong to present this as entirely a kind of vindictive delight in the failures and embarrassments of superiors. There might be some of that, more especially when less amusing consequences of incompetence are actually being experienced. Then, there might be an overriding tone of ridicule. But on occasions, especially in recollection, and in legends, the ridicule and ill-feeling has evaporated, and the overriding tone is one of fondness. These howlers,

errors, and misjudgements are accepted as a contribution to humanity, and that is how they are celebrated. The ecstasy of the humour lies not so much in the content by itself, as in the extreme incongruity of the people perpetrating it, in relation to it. These are senior personnel - headmasters, their deputies - who, as previously noted, are more committed to the institutionalized structure, and have performed more accommodations. In their responsibility for, and dedication to, the overall running of the school, they have a preoccupation with administration and policy, with rules and timetables, with 'appearances' (e.g. the public image of the school) and 'forms' (i.e. the way in which things are done) of a completely different degree and order from the rest of the staff. That such institutionalized people can, on occasions, act in such outrageously 'foolish' fashion is an implicitly shared delight, where all concerned are allies, and the common foe, the institutional framework of the school. 'There's nowt so queer as folk', one member of staff was always declaiming. The comedian or fool who sets off a chain of humour, is a person of special worth, since he promotes 'a bit of the transcendence designed to make sport of those situations, events and taboos that lie heaviest upon us if seen only from an earnest and serious perspective.' (Pollio and Edgerley, 1976, p.240).

There is a lot of this in the sniping at rituals, as in Assemblies, hymn practices, fire-drills, as discussed above.

There might be elements of personal animosity and restoration of professional status, but there is also ridicule of the ritual as an enterprise in itself, as some kind of uncomfortable transmutation of life. It needs this humorous treatment to expose its pretentiousness. Laughter can be a great leveller. One example of this was the school's Sports' Day, one of the great annual rituals of the school year. This called for considerable organization on the part of the Games staff, and complete co-operation from the rest, who were required to act as starters, stewards, convenors, recorders, announcers, calligraphers, policemen and cheer-leaders. It was not to everybody's taste. Indeed to many it was an added burden, completely incidental to their main function as teachers. There were problems of motivation and order - since for many pupils it was simply an opportunity for a laugh - of a change of role and arena, and of inter-departmental rivalry. This latter was particularly acute among some members of staff who resented the P.E. department's assumption of plenipotentiary powers on these occasions, especially as they were using those powers to subject them to unpleasant experiences.

The gloom that had settled over the staffroom during the dinner hour break in anticipation of the Sports afternoon was suddenly dispelled when it was noticed that it had begun to rain, very, very slightly. The 'wits' went quickly to work:

'Can I have a runner - I mean a swimmer - please?'

(Using pretend binoculars, through the window)

('Are you ready? On your marks!')

'Calling Mr. Lewis, glug, glug, glug...'

'Can we have all runners at the deep end?'

'That boy with the outboard engine is disqualified!'

'The shot is sinking.'

'With a boy underneath.'

'Ten to one on the one in the diver's helmet.'

'Don't forget to go straight to the decompression chamber when you've finished the race.'

'I've just seen Julie Marne. She said it was only a little shower. "We're certainly going to get a little wet this afternoon, but I don't think it'll be too bad," she said.'

'So saying, she dived into the playground and struck out manfully for the gym.'

'Ted, can you get your band to strike up "A Life on the Ocean Wave", and a few sea shanties, just to drop her a hint?'

'Or "Fierce Raged the Tempest O'er the Deep"?'

'We'll all change into bathing costumes, goggles and flippers and come and join in.'

'I hear they're going to issue us with shooting sticks and polythene bags this year.'

'Cor, look at it, it's making dents in Sandra's car roof!'

'Where's Fuller, for heaven's sake!'

'He was last seen tacking up the causeway...'

'...Dropping anchor over the girls' changing room.'

The joking intensified with the rain, and eventually Julie Marne came in and announced to universal applause and merriment that the Sports had been cancelled. The feelings that lay behind this humour were articulated to me by Ted Lester. He was quite happy to 'miss Sports afternoon'. He was envious of the P.E. department - it was one of the 'sacred cows'.

'The kids don't want to watch, they don't want to run, you're forever chasing them up for being in school, writing in the toilets, smoking and so on. It's a hell of a job to get them to compete, or to watch, worse than trying to teach them - at least you know where you are with your own room and your own subject. Then they have their hierarchy of jobs. If you're a starter for the 400 metres, that's a cushy number. But if you're race co-ordinator, that's a hell of a job. You've got to get them all together.'

They're in these four pens, and they're always going missing. Jack Fuller allocates jobs all off his own bat, without the courtesy of asking.'

In short, Sports afternoon challenged the day-to-day survival mechanisms which were the ordinary teacher's safeguard, and disturbed the status equilibrium of the staff by elevating the P.E. department to a position of high authority. These two factors deprived the great amount of organizational detail that was necessary of its credibility, thus laying it open for ridicule. In the example above, certain features of it are seized on with alacrity, and lampooned in the overall expression of opposition to the activity. It is a good example of the use of humour to disguise enmity, anger and frustration, but again, with evidence of the 'growth' element, which appears, is indulged in and enjoyed on its own account.

Male staffroom chat and laughter often has a certain earthiness, especially among younger or less professionalized members. And there is nothing more basic than sex. Flirtation is common in mixed staffrooms.

'You should have been here yesterday! She had a bruise which she was showing around. No, first of all she comes in and says, "Cor! I've got a big one!" Then they got over in that corner, to examine it and all the women gathered round, saying "Cor! What a whopper!

What a beauty! What do you put on it? It
 mustn't half hurt when you ride your horse!
 How did you get one as big as that, there?"
 Some people got a private viewing, but I
 didn't get one....'

The transformation can often be seen running along the
 edges of the institutional framework. The line of
 quivering lips on the stage during hymn practice Assemblies,
 the asides during fire drills, the ruses to alleviate the
 boredom of doing reports (such as trying to fill a whole
 line with 'satisfactory', or drawing pictures and running
 a book on what it is, with such comments as 'Fair' and
 'Good') all indicate the fine balance between role and
 person, paradigm and practice, programme and survival.
 One hilarious lunch hour was spent in filling in forms
 (than which there is no more bureaucratic feature) for a
 colleague doing a project for a diploma:

'What have you put for "occupation"?''

'Teaboy to a steeplejack. What have you put?'

'Deep sea diver, unreturned.'

'Irish peat-cutter's mate.'

Another highly bateable institutional symbol is school
 uniform. Though as teachers they might support the
 principle in all seriousness, they can still make light
 of it. Thus after one stern announcement from Barney that

there would be an 'inspection' in the morning, there was much hilarity in the staffroom, focussing mainly on the colour of the girls' knickers - again the return to basics.

'The green knicker brigade will be out in force again tomorrow.'

'The girls will be going round all their aunts and cousins to borrow a pair of green ones.'

'It will make a change for Trudy Wilson to have any on at all.'

'Cheetah will be there inspecting, going up and down the rows...'

'...with little mirrors on the end of his boots...'

'...and his long cane, with a torch tied on the end.'

'My girls are dead worried. I told them they'd have to take everything off on Monday, and I hoped none of them were tattooed, and I think they believed me.'

'That wouldn't worry my lot. They'd be only too willing to oblige.'

'My girls have just about got one set of regulation kit between them. Whenever any one of them wants to go out and has to go and report to Flossie, they have a quick whip round for the right tie, socks, shoes...'

'There'll be some quick change acts along the line with your girls on Monday then!'

'Jimmy Sloan's green sleeve will come in useful won't it?' (The nearest any part of Jimmy's ragged clothing came to the uniform colour was a huge green ink stain on one grey jacket sleeve.)

Chorus: 'Greensleeves is my delight...'

At times, someone will, deliberately I suspect, aim to create a mirthful atmosphere, again through the well-known technique of incongruities, offering him or herself as the butt of the joke. Thus one whole mid-day break was once taken up with Frank Boundley's defence of queueing as a restful experience.

'You're in the queue, you can't do nothing about it, so you might as well relax and shut off. Everybody else is hustling and bustling about. There's too much dashing about in this world, not enough pausing to think...queues stop you dashing around, make you stop and think. You know you won't do it unless you're forced to do it, and queues are the only thing I know about that make you do it...oh yes, if I go to the bank, or Sainsbury's and see a number of queues I'll always join the largest one, or if I'm on the road and get in a jam or come up behind

one of them M.I.T. lorries, I'll think "good we're in for a nice, relaxed drive now".

I'll never try to overtake, why should I deprive myself of what I enjoy most?'

Frank sustained this line of talk for the whole of the lunch hour, while the staffroom 'wits' spun variations around it:-

'Oh dear, I've punctured my basket, I'll have to sit down till the floor manager repairs it.'

'What do you do, Frank, if when you come to go out there aren't any queues? Keep going round till there are some?'

'Sometimes I will actually go looking for queues, if I'm feeling in need of relaxation. If I see a big one I'll get in it, whatever they're queueing up for.'

'Now Sir, when is your baby due?'

'When did you have your last period?'

'Is this the tooth that's hurting?'

'This is the last job we're offering you, you've refused six already.'

'Men's toilets are round the other side, Sir.'

Thus a pleasant dinner hour was passed and people went off

smiling to their lessons. The humour was developed out of nothing in particular, in other words it could not be represented as a reaction or response to threatening people or situations, or as dissipating conflict or as tension release. It was a creative act in itself. This gives it a broader setting. 'Humour as an example of the creative act in its full range of potential, or humour as play, is a sensitive means of coping, an adaptive vehicle for making life's compromises, and is, therefore, a growth experience.' (Fry and Allen, 1976, p.252).

This fondness and affection which marks the human bond is often forgotten amid the overriding conflict that prevails in many schools.

'There's nowt so queer as folk'. One wonders whether the eccentricities are being celebrated in honour of the individual or ridiculed from the standpoint of the profession. Thus old, stone-deaf Caldicott might have been an 'old bugger', an expert at survival at others' expense, but at times one was forced to admire his animal cunning, and his deafness led to some amusing consequences. At one staff meeting, from which he was thought to be absent, he was savagely attacked from all sides. When they came to leave the room at the end of the meeting, to everybody's surprise and consternation he was found in the wing armchair, near the door. To this day nobody knows if his hearing aid was switched on or off. That chair has been christened 'the Seige Perilous' and has become another laughter symbol, the key to an experience that will cure a

few pains and forge a few bonds.

Fondness for the pupils as individuals is evident in the following teacher's remarks on some of her pupils:-

'John Hurley, he's a charmer, he always says "Cheers Miss!" if I ask him to do something. I think he fancies his chances with me, always telling me risque jokes, and I'll laugh, others are quite embarrassed. Paul Hopkins is very expansive. If I'm trying to find something out, he comes in saying, "You'll never find out, Miss, you'll never find out!" I say, "Do you mind, I'm conducting this!" "Oh, sorry I spoke, sorry I spoke!"'

The sense of individuality coming over from these comments contrasts strongly with the stereotyped comments of the teacher in Chapter 10, operating in the professional plane. It also contrasts strongly with laughter arising from conflict, or from professional failure. This is certainly very common. As with the writing of reports, laughter helps sustain a view of self as expert, and infallible. Shared experiences of failure are accounted for in terms of the object, and often ridiculed. Thus one teacher read out to the class a 'hoot' of an essay somebody had written during an examination. Killing himself with laughter as he read it (it was a preposterous tale about the Last Supper), he left the class in no doubt about the idiocy of the author. A similar motive might be

held to lay behind the recounting of howlers.

'Queen Elizabeth was known as the virgin queen.

She had a unique way of getting what she wanted.'

'The ancient Britons had rough mating on the floor.'

'The French executed people in a public place.'

Again these have an earthy ring and the laughter raised is serving a variety of functions. The professional motive appears uppermost, though glee at the enormous incongruity revealed by the slightest human error is a universal phenomenon. Teachers too can make 'howlers' as the one who wrote on a girl's report, 'I do not like to see her bottom'. There is nothing as tedious, or professional as writing reports. Such slips provide personal relief for all concerned, including the perpetrator.

Some psychological elements

I have mentioned tension release agents or 'fools' as laughter producers. The other main suppliers of humour are the staffroom 'wits'. These might be individual humourists in their own right, or like Phil Harvey, born raconteurs and/or impressionists. His version of the 'Hindenburg-Ludendorf' duo (as he called Barney and Miss Sparkes) never failed to amuse. It would be inaccurate, however, to suggest that the staff was always all equally amused. Jim Martell confided in me once that 'sometimes I think they go too far'. For him, at times, they

overstepped the bounds of respect that he felt for his superiors - it was the merciless baiting of Barney and Flossie that disturbed him most. Teachers in a staffroom are not the unity they sometimes appear to be by the character given them by the most talkative, and the biggest laughter-raisers. They differ, in the staff hierarchy, in their attachment to role, in their degree of commitment, in their accommodation capacity, in their ability to laugh, and in their perceived need for it. There is often a 'fifth column' element in the staffroom, or at least one agent, who will identify more with the hierarchy than with the staff in general. Their perceptions of what is humorous, or what calls for humour, differs and they have ways of accounting for the laughter of others that reflect deficiency not in the institution, nor in the upper hierarchy, but in the laughter-makers themselves. This puts a different slant on some staffroom humour, and suggests strong psychological elements.

A hint of these comes from a consideration of the most consistent staffroom laughter-makers in the school. There were three of these mainly. According to another teacher, what united this group was not their laughter, but their own insecurity. The laughter, in large part, was a product of that - a search for esteem, status and power, in their own eyes and in those of their colleagues. Since laughter works well in dyadic and tryadic relationships, they found strength in this union, feeding off each other, creating humorous sessions, taking gratification from their

individual input and gaining strength from the overall development. One in particular promoted as much conflict among the staff as humour. He had been very aggressive, and personal, about a paper I had presented to the staff. 'He would', said another teacher, 'we've all had difficulty there, don't worry, that was inevitable. He would have taken it personally, he argues with anything, all the staff have difficulty with him. He's a pain in the neck at times. He wouldn't see the point of it, he'd put peculiar twists on anything he could find.' This teacher thought the alliance a very brittle one, and far from a corporate union in the name of humanity, sheer personal indulgence. 'They'll only listen to one another for as long as they want to, then they'll switch off.' Two of them, Eric and Steve might seem a pair, but Eric was relatively new, didn't know Steve like the rest of them did, and when he did, he would 'chuck him up'. In the meantime, Eric had his problems, notably an 'insatiable and intolerable desire to have the last word in any decisions that were made'. The way to deal with Eric was to allow him a great deal of voice, and let him think a large part of any decision was his. He seemed to need this reward for his ego and self-esteem, and could not brook opposition and argument. The ploy then was not to argue with Eric, but to engineer him into your position, so that he could himself articulate it. Only then would he attach any status to it.

The third, sometime member of the group, was also something of a Jekyll and Hyde character. A man of great charm and

wit, at times he could also be vicious and cruel. I observed some of his lessons, when the former image prevailed, but even then pupils remarked to me, 'Paddy's on his best behaviour today, Paddy is; what a nice little bear he is, all cuddly-buddly. You want to see him with his claws out. Can't you make yourself invisible?' I did not set much store by this until one day, making up some notes in private he entered the adjoining, empty room with a pupil and, unaware of my presence, mounted a vicious verbal assault on the child. Here is the extract from my brief note:-

'Do you want me to take you in there and dust you up?! Do you want a flogging to within an inch of your life?! A whole series of threats, assaults, questions sustained over a period of ten minutes until the child broke down, crying. The tone then changed to strident appeal, 'Why go on, where's it going to end, what's the point...?'

This hardly does justice to the viciousness of the onslaught, which was far in excess of teachers' customary 'dressing-down' of pupils, however severe, and was sufficient to convince me that all that the pupils had said about him in this respect was true.

This is by no means intended as a definitive assessment of these teachers' characters, merely to point to the possible importance of psychological elements in the creation of

laughter. Humour has many forms and functions, and it is something of a paradox that some of its extreme expressions are but one step from extreme despair. For while humour and laughter can be a rescue agent, it can also be a despoiler. To reduce everything to a joke is to tread continually in a noman's land, a limbo with no roots in the 'real' world, a comic mirror image of how things are. The distortion becomes the reality, and ultimately turns in on itself in anomic confusion. In this respect laughter is like a beneficent, but powerful drug, highly efficacious if used in the appropriate doses, but dangerous and inhibiting if they are exceeded.

Laughter Inhibitors

Occasionally, however, at Lowfield certain combinations of factors produced incidents for which laughter was no antidote. These were the real disturbers of the peace and I judged it important to identify them. I noticed the following factors obstructing laughter:-

1) Psychological and physiological state of the teacher.

There seems to be a higher incidence of staffroom 'explosions' towards the end of a term, during or just after examinations, or at other times of high tension. With some all social poise is lost and customary civilities, such as passing the time of day, forgone. Others might invert the process and actually invade the staffroom with their distress. The staffroom has been swamped by the tide of their misery and offers no relief, and like drowning men, they threaten to pull the others down with them. At such times staffrooms

are unhappy places, and staff sectionalise, some going to the local pub, or to department rooms, storecupboards, or the games field, or even home.

2) Injustice Some things just are not funny and cannot be made so. Bureaucracies operate on the assumption of equal work and responsibilities according to status, and equal distribution of resources. If you get less work and more resources than average, that might be cause for self-congratulation - but if you get more work and less resources, that is without doubt the very worst thing that can happen to you in State secondary schools. Hence the trauma of the 'free period' ritual every morning. The teacher who can smile at the loss of a 'free' is very rare indeed. He is more likely to have others smiling at him, in relief that it is not them.

3) Undermining of status, or threats to professional equilibrium or personal insults. Of course, some pupils threaten teacher status continually but not usually irretrievably. Sometimes, however, they go too far. Also it is up to each teacher to negotiate his own position not only vis-a-vis the pupils, but also his colleagues and the headmaster. Laughter presupposes this kind of equilibrium. It assumes that, though there may be frustration, difficulties and altercations, on balance, the flow of activities is on the credit side, and that, to some extent, one is achieving one's personal aim, however negotiated that might be. Otherwise, sour feeling is

likely to predominate, unrelievable by humour.

All these factors are evident in the following examples, which promoted 'heavy' conflict (as opposed to 'negotiable' conflict):-

Example A

One particular instance that occurred during my stay concerned Jerry Horne and Harry Timpson, major laughter-makers as a rule. They discovered one day, from pupils as I gathered, that there would be no spectators at the swimming gala. Disappointment at not gaining some extra 'freese' was compounded by the empathic feeling of injustice they felt on behalf of the kids and their resentment at the high-handedness of the P.E. department in making decisions they felt more appropriately made by the headmaster. Significantly this lunchtime debate was totally lacking in humour, and highly charged with inter-staff animosity. It came to light that, because of problems of discipline, Jack Fuller had decided that the Staff-School hockey match was better played in the lunch-hour. Again the autocracy of the decision, the loss of valuable free time, and the denial of the gain of free time doing a pleasurable activity - a great aid to survival - led to disappointment, frustration and anger, and totally precluded laughter. The very next day, Jerry Horne learnt again from the kids, that some House cricket matches were to be played during two periods when there was to be a staff meeting to supervise the rest of the school, but these cricket matches would consume three

of them, leaving two - Jerry, since he knew nothing about cricket, and a student - to 'control' the five hundred other pupils, who would in all probability be rather boisterous at the break in routine. Jerry felt particularly aggrieved, since the other form teachers concerned had volunteered their absence from the staff meeting, cutting the ground from under his feet. When the head asked him, he felt he had little option but to agree. Now there was this further injustice.

'Jack Fuller says he's been to higher authority, but I know the old man - Jack would mumble something to him and Barney would mumble "Yes, all right" back without realising what was going on. It's Fuller's direct responsibility... it's all right for him..."I'm all right Jack"... he'll get his cricket in, get his umpires, and be nice and comfortable in the staff meeting. What about us poor sods trying to cope with that mob out there?'

As noted, laughter is frequently both a symptom and a reinforcer of solidarity. Threats to, and rifts in solidarity promote the obverse, conflict and anger.

Example B

Another outstanding example was the shattering of David Sylvester's 'inner peace'. Here was a man of great conviction, who lived the message that he put about, that peace lay within the individual, not in all these frenzied

activities that took place outside. This extract from my field notes of an Assembly talk given by him one morning gives some idea of the history of arriving at that conviction. It is much condensed.

The story of his life was basically one of anti-establishmentarianism throughout school and college. He had all the feelings and trappings, supported the right groups. He championed the 'Rolling Stones' against the establishment's 'Beatles', grew his hair long, wore zany clothes. He went crazy when Jimmy Townsend smashed his guitar on the microphones, ecstatic when Jimmy Hendrix performed. As he went up the school he changed, from supporting the 'Stones' to Hendrix, for example. None of them quite suited exactly. Later at college, he met many people who claimed to have found the ultimate solution, but none of them suited him. Later he went to America and he came across a group who made a lot of sense to him, called the 'Drop-ins'. One guy there particularly drew his attention. He stood apart from the others, a gentle, quiet guy. He plucked up courage one day and went up to him and said, 'This is it, man, this is where it's all at!' He said gently, 'That may be so, but it's what goes on in here that matters (i.e. in the mind), this has to be at peace with itself.' And that guy really put him in his place. He

realised that all his previous attachments had been based on hate. What he sought was peace... The talk was illustrated by appropriate tracks. Yet, he had always aligned himself to movements that promised revolution in some form or another - until he found peace with the Drop-ins. And he hoped he still carried a bit of it around with him. It was not too late for them - yet. After the talk, Clem Marne sang a song to his own guitar accompaniment of a dream he had about no more war...

This is interesting in several respects, but here let us note the firmness of the conviction and the length and highly-charged nature of the journey getting to it. David's 'peace' withstood all manner of buffetings, but Barney the headmaster managed to undermine it, and in a comparatively short space of time. They had had several altercations along the lines of Barney's traditionalism versus David's libertarianism, all successfully resisted by David, until the day Barney visited one of David's lessons. Again I quote from my field notes, the story as told me shortly afterwards by a far from peaceful David.

David was showing a film to a 5th form on housing. All had gone pretty well in the project they were doing. Barney came in and stood at the opposite end of the room, hesitated, then came in far enough, so a number stood up, whereupon he waved them down. David

wished he'd make up his mind what he wanted.

'Anyway, I went over to him and thought I'd better say something, so I started to tell him what the film was about, putting it in context. Half-way through - he clearly hadn't been listening - he suddenly bellowed to Mervyn Waters to get his feet down - and strode across the room to him, thus obscuring the film and concentrating all attention on him and Mervyn Waters. There was some altercation with Mervyn, remonstrating as is his wont, then Barney finally stormed back across the room, his image all over the screen, and out, having taken over and ruined the entire lesson. I've resisted getting steamed up over him till then - but it went then - I seethed! (he gestures). The ignorance of it!'

In fact Barney's intervention in this way might not have been all that ignorant - on the contrary. Up to that point, David had resisted all Barney's attempts to 'cut him down to size'. Humour had been a useful weapon in his defence, joining in the general lampooning of the headmaster. But it was of no avail to him now. We might interpret what happened like this - Barney, continuously on the look-out for 'constitutional' ways of putting down David, found one in this film lesson in the form of Mervyn Waters' lounging posture, which epitomised, for him, the dangers in David's radical style of teaching.

Using this symbol, Barney conveyed a loud and clear message to David, nicely dramatised by the circumstances, a) that this form of teaching was unwelcome, and b) that he was the headmaster, and would, if necessary, use his superior authority. David's distress was an indication that he had got the message. He now had to decide whether to allow himself to be socialised into the Lowfield way of doing things, or whether to continue to go his own way and develop unbearable conflict. In fact, the commitment to his ideals allowed for no compromise, and it was the latter course that he took, ultimately to resign his post after a stay of little over a year. The point, for our present discussion, is that this conflict, bared of all its camouflaging gloss, allowed for no mediation by humour, or by any other device. It was too open, too revealed, too frank, too oppositional, and the opposing parties' commitments to their respective positions too complete, to allow any room for reconstruction or manoeuvre. From this point on, David saw nothing funny whatever in Barney, no matter what high pitches of merriment on that account were struck in the staffroom. For him, the issue was much too real, much too earnest to allow for its transcendence.

Example C

A typical laughter-resistant item occurred in the last week of the Christmas term. During a 'reading competition' two 4th year boys - Clanton and Wilcock - hid under the stage and refused to come out. They made noises through the grill, such as 'Yoo-hoo, Miss Travis!' thus effectively

spoiling proceedings without actually stopping them. However, the headmaster was on the stage behind the curtains (unbeknown to them, in the staff's opinion) but was unable to detect their presence conclusively. One teacher thought this was what irked him - they were getting the better of him. He had the piano moved over the trapdoor to block their escape. Then, coming down the steps from the stage, he forgot the organ and banged his head, much to the glee of the children in the hall. There was a welter of suppressed giggles hurriedly stopped as he glowered at them. He then 'had a go' at Miss Travis and Mr. Whitlock, who were supervising the reading competition, in front of the assembled children.

Paternalism will become inverted if its own armaments are turned against it, and will reply with vindictive assault. In this case, the head had been well and truly 'shown up' and Clanton and Wilcock had scored a great triumph. Mr. Barney had contributed to his own discomfiture by banging his head, which compounded the irresolution and failure to detect. The balance of respect had to be restored. For Clanton and Wilcock, it was the worst punishment he could administer - suspension. But he had been shown up before the senior school, so they too, must be made to pay. They were assembled in the hall and given a general dressing-down. Things were going to be different from then on. They were denigrated as human beings according to one account. School uniform was going to be rigorously inspected, and boys were to have hair cut above

collars. David Sylvester, now continually smarting from his losing battle with the head, and whose own hair was shoulder length came into the staffroom afterwards and declared 'That's it, I'm leaving, I'm off, can't stay in this school any longer.' Even Jack Fuller with what he called his 'armchair traditional views', disliked it intensely. They said it was his 'tone' and 'irrationality' especially the fact that 'the huge majority of kids in there were completely innocent of any wrong-doing.' Moreover, he associated his staff with this 'new totalitarian, oppressive policy'. Sylvester resented this. He wasn't 'going to bloody do it'. A group of 4th year boys told me later that the head's influence was mediated through his teachers. 'It's like the S.S. you know, with him as Hitler.' One said, 'It's bad enough as it is - he says you're here to be educated, but I can't learn in a forced situation, I have to be relaxed. Now we're not going to be allowed to do a damn thing. I'll be glad when he leaves.'

It would appear that the only beneficiaries of this incident, and the only ones entitled to 'laugh' were Clanton and Wilcock. Everyone else - headmaster, staff and pupils - were outraged. Thus a situation which might have been a mild form of 'mucking about' was interpreted as 'subversive' laughter (see Chapter 7), a criminal and rebellious assault on the headmaster's status, the restoration of which had to be made up by sacrifices from the rest of the school. No 'fun' could be made out of this incident by anybody - except,

perhaps, the two perpetrators. It was too wilful, irrational, vicious, unjust, arbitrary. It overstepped the limits of accommodation. And it shows the extraordinary and quite unreasonable power of the headmaster within the school to rule, as he chose, by whim. 'The most original thing Clanton's ever done,' commented Sylvester, 'and he gets suspended for it!' There were, of course, no mass hair-cuts, nor uniform reformations - the display of rage and power had been sufficient.

This incident combines all three of the conflict-producing contingencies mentioned above - exhaustion at the end of a term, injustice, and a disturbance of the finely balanced equilibrium in the school, which takes weeks and weeks of subtle and complex negotiation to attain. Both staff and pupils were deprived of the right of appeal to secondary adjustments. Laughter was no antidote. It is not difficult to see that it would not take many such incidents to reduce the whole school to strain and misery, making survival for all intensely difficult.

Example D

Another instructive incident arose during the school examinations. Because of different 'sets' in Maths, and because each set had different teachers for different aspects of the subject, the circumstance arose where nine different examination papers were needed within the same rooms. Some did not appear. Allan Groves, for example, only had seven, though he searched diligently for the other

two, even asked some of the Maths staff for them. There was general chaos. Many had finished their 'bits' of papers by break, others had not even started. The Maths department were outraged that their examination had been 'sabotaged'. The staff who had been supervising were equally outraged at the incompetence of the Maths department's arrangements. Insults were hurled about, and physical assault threatened. 'He was bloody rude to me...', 'If he says that to me I'll stick him one on...', 'Ridiculous! 40 minutes for a 1½ hour paper!!...', 'I'm not marking 2W's, I'm not marking them, and that's that!', 'It's the kids I think about, done all that revision, one little lad came to me this morning, crying he was...'. Allan Groves astutely observed that because so many people were involved in the difficulty, the Maths department should have known it was not the supervisory teachers' fault as individuals, but the system's. By causing so much disturbance they were covering their own tracks, or trying to. Disguising professional failure is one of the functions of staff laughter, but sometimes it is inappropriate, for example, when the failure is peculiar to one group of the staff and not others, when it adversely affects the others, and when its consequences are going to be evident and incriminating. Bigger guns are then brought to bear, and heavier smokescreens laid.

Interdepartmental rivalry frequently hovers on the borders separating humour from malice, in ridicule for example. But it is a thin divide, and the scales are often tipped

by minor, even trivial factors. If there is humour, it disguises the real grievance within, and helps one to conduct one's business.

Some other examples

Some relationships are unamenable to rescue by laughter. While some might joke about SL, Jim Martell was unable to see anything funny in them at all.

'They're terrible, particularly the girls, they're revolting, they really are - filthy, vile, despicable.' I asked him in what way. 'In their minds... I don't catch what they say, thank God, I just hear the guffaws - you wonder how much is directed at you. There's Carol Landers and Sandra Turner - great big lump - really coarse, horrible she is, disgusting. The boys aren't so bad, just won't work - idle and lazy. Yet on their own they're different. Sharman, for example, that very tall boy, an idle waster in class, yet as an individual...I had a talk with him the other day - his background, family, what he's going to do - and for the first time I felt I was getting through to him. They're all O.K. as individuals I suppose, but in a group! If there were a 5th form dinner this year, I wouldn't go. It will be the first one I've missed for over 20 years, but I shan't go. Yet there was no group we did

more for, as a staff, by way of preparation, countless hours spent, hundreds of meetings among staff, making sure we didn't overlap on subject matter.'

Even here one sees redemption in the individual, but as a group, for Jim, 5L were beyond the pale. The feeling, it must be said, was mutual. They staggered on, from lesson to lesson, under clouds of bad feeling and perpetually on the brink of breakdown. Some individual relationships were of this kind, for instance those between Ted Lester and Phil Harman. Quite regularly, each would tell me how much he hated the other. Senior, and long-serving teachers both, they had not spoken to each other for eight years. 'Loathsome, pompous individual!' said Harman. 'I'll never understand', said Lester, 'why someone who hates kids so much could stand teaching so long. He's a funny feller, you know!' Therein lies the irony. There was no fun. Their gorges rose at the mere thought of each other, so much so that Harman had removed himself from the staffroom, and lived a hermit's life in his formroom, in a separate building.

Thus, the psychological and physiological state of the teacher, perceived injustices, the undermining of status, threats to professional equilibrium, inter-departmental and interpersonal rivalry or hatred, and the obstruction of routes to secondary adjustments, all work as blockages to laughter, either dispelling its efficacy or pre-empting its

use. But these all imply breakdown, or non-survival. They represent cracks in the system. Invariably they are repaired by humour, or at least humour is a sign of its repair. Laughter is the coping mechanism par excellence. Lack of it might suggest non-survival. Its presence is a sure indication of managing.

Conclusion

The obstruction of humour in institutional life is a serious matter. It heralds the breakdown of order. The presence of laughter is a sure sign of coping. This is why headteachers like a 'happy school', and a 'happy classroom'. In the ordinary course of events, humour and laughter operate to resolve conflict, maintain control, preserve order, or release tension. Staffroom humour displays these functions, but also a further, supra-institutional one, which locates it within a conception of man struggling to get on terms with the social forms and structures that assail him.

'Humour alone, that magnificent discovery of those who are cut short in their calling to highest endeavour, those who falling short of tragedy are yet as rich in gifts as in affliction. Humour alone (perhaps the most inborn and brilliant achievement of the human spirit) attains to the impossible and brings every aspect of human existence within the rays of its prism. To live in the world as though it were not the world, to respect the law and yet stand above it, to renounce as though it were no renunciation, all the favourite, commonly formulated propositions of an exalted, worldly wisdom, only humour has the power to make those paradoxes obvious...it is a third kingdom wherein the spirit becomes tough and elastic, a way of reconciliation, of extolling

the saint and the profligate in one breath,
and making the two poles meet...You should
not take things too seriously...the immortals
will tell you that...seriousness is an
accident of time, it puts too high a value on
time. Eternity is a mere moment, just long
enough for a joke.'

(Hesse, 1929)

Much staffroom laughter might be put into this context - a reassertion of the perceived basic rights of preferred identities, a ritual to remind one of a wider faith, using as content those aspects of the situation which appear to subvert the principles on which it rests. By this interpretation the 'conflict' or 'control' evident in the humour is a lesser factor, even a misleading one. It is to assign humour a place within the institutional structure, wherein it plays its part among the checks and balances - but no more. It thus misses the most outstanding quality of all belonging to laughter and humour - its ability to transcend the immediate situation and appeal to a broader scale of criteria. By this token, it is a supremely important part of school life. Through it, one keeps a human perspective.

CHAPTER TWELVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study has been a symbolic interactionist account of aspects of life in a particular school, interjected with considerations of the influence on those aspects of institutional and external factors. I have shown that school is a mixture of realities, depending on perspectives, contexts, resources, identities, and the outcome of negotiations. Different realities result from divisions. The main divisions are promoted by factors external to the school, such as social class and the technological nature of society; others by institutional elements. Teacher, pupil, and parent perspectives both reflect and promote those divisions, while teacher and pupil strategies and adaptations are the expression of them, consolidating and promoting in turn. I will argue that divisions arise from different sources, that some are less deep-rooted than others, that influence is injected into the differentiating at various levels, and that these levels are not necessarily inextricably linked with each other. On the one hand, there is the press of powerful forces in society, but on the other, a range of choices for the individual teacher. In the interstices of the prevailing system, as evidenced at Lowfield, lie the scope and opportunity for change. In this final chapter, I shall refer to the main themes of the study in the light of the implications for educational change.

Perspectives

There are both group and personal perspectives, those that are held in common with others, and those that are

differentiated within the self. Some key elements in two prominent pupil group perspectives identified at Lowfield, were illustrated in Chapter 4, in relation to subject choice. Those associated with a working-class background were shown to be contributing to a diffident, social, counter-cultural model, others to a utilitarian, ability, interest model. There was evidence, too, that some pupils employed different perspectives in and out of school. To some, the school was an alien and hostile environment prompting defensive and cushioning adaptations. Outside, within their own culture, they expressed themselves within a context they understood, often, ironically, exhibiting the qualities some teachers struggled to impose upon them at school.

The reflection of similar criteria in parents' perspectives was also discerned. There were pointers as to how they differ among themselves on roughly social class lines, corresponding to pupil perspectives and how they differ as a body from teachers in viewing the pupil. With regard to the former, middle-class parents show more complex reasoning by 'school' criteria in advising their children, and are more persuaded by 'school' factors; working-class parents are less instrumentally orientated, appear to have some suspicions of school and teachers, are more persuaded by social and personal factors (Chapter 4). With regard to the latter, parents show particularistic, familial, amateur and personal criteria, as opposed to the teacher's universalistic, institutional, professional and

impersonal (Chapter 10). It should be repeated that these indications derive from small numbers within one case study whose major focus was elsewhere. But they are worthy, I would maintain, of further research, and suggestive of other possibilities. Since behaviour and action are a product of mediation through those frameworks, then it is a task of major importance to identify the range, nature and properties of those frameworks. This study is a small beginning in that respect.

Access to pupil and parent perspectives was by informal interview (Chapter 2). For the teachers, I had recourse to my own knowledge as a participant, as well as using interview and observation. I have characterised teacher perspectives as having survival, professional and personal orientations. As survivor, problems of control have become paramount (see Chapter 9). It is not simply a question of 'more or less teaching' depending on resources. The teaching has become transmuted into a different activity. The transmission of knowledge or awakening and developing of skills associated with 'educating' is relegated to a minor role and the teacher constructs his activity in accordance with factors such as what is likely to promote the greatest ease and quiet, and less personal strain, while fulfilling the letter of his obligations. This was the major disposition toward the classroom at Lowfield. Toward the outside world, however, the teachers presented a 'professional' front. Here they are guided by considerations of solidarity, 'expertise', 'self-protection',

separateness. Thus the perspective changes according to context, and depending on what it is directed towards. The third teacher perspective I identified at Lowfield, was the 'personal' one, most clearly evident in the staffroom at times when it served as a private area or 'back region'. Here the teacher might be released from the exigencies of role, either as survivor or as professional, and might view school activities through a 'private' framework. This enables him to identify and to evaluate his other perspectives. One of the major staffroom activities at Lowfield - laughter - was seen as an important mechanism, easing the transition from survival or professional contexts into private, personal ones.

These by no means complete the range of teacher perspectives. I have not, for instance, considered the teacher as pedagogue, or careerist, or bureaucrat, which possibly prevail in less beleaguered situations. My aim has been not to foreclose on the range of teacher and pupil categories, but to explore more features of the many-sided nature of their own views and activities.

Distinguishing among various perspectives promises to aid our understanding of many crisis points and issues that arise in school - the showing-up of pupils, moments of 'heavy conflict' in school, teacher schizophrenia, parental frustration and bewilderment over reports, or how they should advise their children over choices and decisions they form at school. Often they emerge from interfaces

between, for example, teacher as professional against teacher as person, or child as pupil versus child as child, or public institution versus private life. 'Battles' such as those between the girls and the senior mistress over 'ladylike' behaviour, (Chapter 10), are better understood as clashes of cultural perspective than as socialization attempts against intransigence. A focus on perspectives also enables us to get behind apparently consensual products, such as 'happiness at school' or 'liking for teacher' as shown in Chapters 5 and 6. Vastly different criteria are being employed. Yet another use of a concentration on 'perspectives' is in relation to a particular subject or issue, for example, the way in which teachers view subject choice, as system-disruptive or -acceptive, and as positive or negative (Chapter 4, or how pupils view teachers and subjects (Chapter 5).

Strategies and Adaptations

A large part of the book has been concerned with identifying and describing actions based on how teachers and pupils have interpreted reality through their various perspectives, in other words how they have gone about securing their ends. This is not a straightforward task, since many of these accommodations are hidden behind some form of rhetoric, or other disguise. Another task has been, therefore, to identify those disguises. This was the case, for example, with teacher survival in Chapter 9, where I described the various survival techniques that I witnessed at Lowfield, together with their associated rhetorics.

How teacher strategical action works out with regard to a particular organizational area was illustrated in Chapter 4, in relation to subject choice. Here, the notion of freedom of choice, the same as embodied in child-centred and progressive teaching, was seen as having far outrun the realities. Teachers bridged the gap between idea and reality by some ingenious arguments and actions. Most areas of the teachers' job have a strategical element. School reports provided another example, operating to a considerable extent in the service of professionalism.

This involves techniques which cuts them off from parents and emphasises the boundaries of the school, but at the same time seeks to enlist the aid of parents in promoting the ideal models the teachers have defined. At the extreme, we have seen that some parents, at times, have felt themselves castigated as a result of their errant child's behaviour, such is held to be their responsibility in producing malleable material. Some parents are lucky enough to possess some negotiating power through 'knowledge of the system', and they might devise a few strategies of their own, but most appear to be at the teachers' mercy with regard to their children's education.

Questions that arise requiring further research are - in these survival strategies, what degree of transmission is there, and how intended is it? How do survival strategies differ from some 'progressive' forms of teaching and conception of the curriculum? Other areas of teacher

activity that might repay examination are teachers' initial allocations of pupils to forms, and their initial 'socializing' tactics of these different groups; individual teachers' ongoing techniques in interaction with pupils with regard to 'cooling-out' and 'warming-up' and methods with regard to placement in jobs. Other questions are:- What other elements of their task are strategic, and to what degree? How do teachers differ among themselves with regard to strategical activity, between, for example, age groups, or 'departments', or 'cliques'? And how do these compare with strategical action in institutional life elsewhere? More research is needed into all aspects of parents' interpretations of school, and the factors bearing upon them. The headteacher is an especially important figure. Much teacher pressure is mediated through him. The investigation of other interactional chains bearing on the headmaster would, therefore, be of interest, to reveal the mechanisms by which society makes its influence felt on the school through the interpretations and constructions of personnel. Such linkages might be the headteacher's relationships with the Education Committee, the Board of Governors, and his personal relationships with the Chief Education Officer, the Chairman of the Board of Governors, and influential parents. Lowfield, as a Secondary Modern about to become a Comprehensive School was the subject of a large number of meetings during this period. One wonders how the headmaster interpreted these proceedings, and internalised others' expectations, and if they squared with others'

interpretations. They certainly had major repercussions for the school, as described in Chapter 4.

I have pointed to the importance of the staffroom and its activity for any conception of the teacher's task. I was particularly impressed at Lowfield with the use and importance of laughter as a device or strategy and I have suggested various ways in which it might be viewed. Primarily, I see it as a device in sustaining equilibrium among perspectives. Further studies on the nature of laughter would be rewarding. Particularly, we might ask if we have become so fond of drawing political implications, detecting functions, correlations and hidden agendas and so forth, that we have overlooked one of the most important elements in our schools, namely their sociability. There was ample evidence of this on both sides of the fence, even in Lowfield, a comparatively disadvantaged school in our system as a whole. In other words, there was a certain amount of unstrategic action and laughter, and this may hold the key to the resolution of problems thrown up in the areas traditionally studied by sociologists.

But there are other aspects of teacher interaction which are not marked by laughter. Unfortunately, we have no studies of staffrooms. Without them, we are in danger of distorting other aspects of the teacher's job. It might not be so falsely conscious as some suppose. But if research oversubscribes professional and educationist contexts, that might be the impression.

As for pupils, I have similarly tried to probe beneath the surface layer of their manifest activity. In Chapter 6, I analysed the values, beliefs, attitudes and strategies that constitute the major category 'work'. According to teacher relationship and type of work, pupils 'negotiated' tolerable degrees of activity under this heading. The analyses in Chapter 5 and 7 present two sides of what is essentially the same picture. The first gives the pupils' views of official processes and organization, the second incorporates observation of their activity. It describes what seemed to me the chief expressions of 'colonization' and 'intransigence' i.e. 'mucking about' and 'subversive laughter'. (Woods, 1977). This latter clearly shows the importance and strategical nature of laughter, either as a boost for their own morale, a cure for boredom or a weapon against the enemy. What is often branded as meaningless behaviour, indeed is actually known as 'messaging about', is often quite orderly and rational in the pupils' terms. Our task then becomes one of identifying the rules governing the behaviour, and the pupil categories upon which they are based. My analysis here was focussed largely on the lower non-examination streams of the upper school, where colonization was rife, tintured at times with a touch of compliance on one side and intransigence on the other. There are, of course, other kinds of pupils, notably those more conformist, and other areas of the pupils' activity, notably that out of school that would repay examination. Indeed it is urgently necessary if we are to accord pupil activity its rightful status. Thus

'having a laugh', 'being bored', 'being shown up', 'being picked on', 'mucking about' become issues of some importance. Interviews with and observations of more conformist pupils would probably reveal other categories.

Negotiation

We have seen that 'work' represents the median activity of what both sides are prepared to settle for. It has 'tolerance' limits on both sides, breach of which induces heavy conflict, which is to be avoided at all costs. But all school life is a continuous process of negotiation and bargaining. This is particularly evident with regard to rules. Both teachers and pupils are very rule conscious. But there are two kinds of rules. There are the formal rules of the institution, and there are the informal rules, often implicit only, of the classroom and everyday interaction. The latter constitute the reality for the inmates. Such rules are not immediately obvious, and knowledge of them is a matter of entering the negotiation. In Chapter 7, I spoke of pupil rules and various types of teacher negotiation. Often those rules were far removed from both letter and spirit of the formal rules. As Waller said, 'What rules secure is not conformity but a different type of non-conformity.' (Waller, 1932). The negotiation of rules makes a fascinating study - it is what 'becoming a teacher' is all about. More especially the study of 'negotiations-gone-wrong' or 'bargains exceeded' are illustrative of the real boundaries of tolerance. We have seen instances at Lowfield of pupils

transgressing group-negotiated rules with teachers (the blazer-ripping incident in Chapter 7) of an individual teacher transgressing traditional (though still implicit) classroom rules in dealing with pupils (the young teacher who tried to exert her authority with 5th form girls, Chapter 10), and of a teacher who offended against some heavily implicit rules binding on all teachers in our society and was successfully 'negotiated' out of the school by the headmaster (Chapter 11). The importance of contexts is already apparent from the discussion on perspectives. Here again they are of relevance in the cross-referencing of life in the school. For rules negotiated in one context may be inappropriate in another, for example, between different teachers. Action that constitutes high fulfilment of the spirit of the rules in one place, might be the most shocking transgression of them in another. The adventure of the two boys under the stage, described in Chapter 11, was the height of originality to the liberationist teacher, David Sylvester, but the basest insolence to the headmaster. Pupils might 'work' for one teacher, but not another (Chapter 6).

The effect of institutional factors

I am referring here to those aspects of the school which are considered necessary for its efficient running as an organization, which, over the years, often become a matter of routine and ritual. Some obvious examples are the temporal divisions of the school day; routines associated with establishing necessary conditions of work, such as

registration, distribution of teachers and pupils; rules and regulations concerning behaviour, dress, work, play; organization of the curriculum, and teacher methods and behaviour. Institutional properties are created, altered or added to by people, of course, but under certain conditions can exercise an influence of their own on action, which seems quite independent of human agency. One of those sets of conditions is induced by increase in size, such as has gradually happened at Lowfield in the years immediately preceding this study. There have been many references throughout this study to the press of institutional factors in their own right on school processes and outcomes.

I have noted, in Chapter 4, the parallels between Lowfield and Cicourel and Kitsuse's Lakeshore. Rosenbaum, also, in his research in an American high school, thought that 'much of what goes on in this school suggests that it is responsive first to the professional and bureaucratic imperatives of itself as an institution, second to those of the large society, and only then to the needs and desires of the family and its students.' (Rosenbaum, 1976). At Lowfield, the actual bureaucratic organization of the school into streamed classes in the lower school, and 'examination' and 'non-examination' in the upper also helped to create the problem. It is a factor in the vicious circle which helps to strengthen the circle. The group perspectives identified in Chapter 4 may originate outside the school, but they are certainly reinforced by

school organizations. As Hargreaves and Lacey showed this promotes consolidation reactions. (Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970). In turn these bring retribution if they are inappropriate, rewards if appropriate; cultural defences and identification are reinforced and contribute toward the imperviousness of the background culture. Nothing illustrates this better than the re-routing of misguided choices, driving the boundaries of advantage further in. If such routes were not there, or their boundaries more flexible, the chain of circumstances would be at least weakened.

Such processes become legitimated over time. They become self justificatory. The procedures, routines, both at a general and individual level, become taken for granted and individuals adjust to them. Official areas are designated to teachers, with special responsibility, who then 'grow' into such areas. In a very real sense, processes like that of subject choice, which have been worked through for a number of years, and refined by many open and clandestine manoeuvres to achieve a high degree of workability, create their own impetus and make their own demands.

The institution also contributes towards pupil adaptations. I located these within pupil cultures, and inasmuch as the school fosters them, it contributes to whatever form pupil adaptations take. It also imposes itself in a more subtle way, as was demonstrated in Chapter 5. At Lowfield, the degree of dislike of certain institutional factors was

remarkable, indicating that control had been lost of those processes, and they were felt to be exerting an influence of their own. This was as true of the teachers as for the non-examination form. For these, I suggested that the mainstream school was more of a reality, hence more pressing. Apart from instrumental aims, however, there was a more general feeling, widely held among pupils and staff that the school was no longer a 'friendly place'. As it had grown in size and changed in character, rules and routines increasingly took over the running of the school, and fuller expression of human nature was reserved for playground and staffroom.

Even so, teachers differ in their accommodation to the institution, and pupils clearly distinguished between those predominantly displaying the symptoms of what might be summarised as teacher-bureaucrats and those of teacher-persons. The former are more bound by institutional forms and processes and more geared to the formal definition of the teacher role. They are more likely to show a higher degree of rule consciousness, exert their authority, and foster formal and depersonalised relationships. For most of the children of this study, they are 'too strict', 'full of moans', 'won't laugh', 'treat you like kids'. Teacher-persons capitalise on the human qualities of warmth, understanding, humour and togetherness. For Lowfield pupils, they are 'more natural', 'more like a friend than a teacher', 'have a laugh with you', 'talk to you like real people'. They identify themselves

less with the institution, their preferred selves being located elsewhere. Teacher-bureaucrats, however, do identify with it. However, while the teachers at Lowfield did differ in these respects, it was not in such hard and fast form. It is perhaps better to view the degree of attachment to formal role as a dimension, along which teachers can be differentiated as a body, but also a single teacher can oscillate according to certain factors - the day of the week, the particular class he is teaching, his overall work-load, his age. Moreover, he is likely to know this, while rueing it. Thus the majority agreed with the pupils that the teachers frequently used their power unreasonably, but, as one said, it was 'largely a consequence of the difficult position they had been put into'. (Chapter 6). At Lowfield, all felt there had been a general shift toward formality, but some teachers still survived as 'persons' in the pupils' eyes. Here also, the importance of humour was noted. The more institutional pressures exert themselves, the more of a life-saver laughter becomes. If a teacher provides it, it is welcomed, not as a frivolity for most pupils also wanted to work to some degree, but as a life-line to a common humanity that transcended the institution. It was the straightlaced authoritarian who rankled, and who, ironically enough, invariably drew forth bouts of subversive laughter, and ultimately heavy conflict. (Chapter 7).

It may sound a commonplace to say that much pupil and

teacher behaviour is 'institutionally produced'. However, it is frequently taken as symptomatic of one's basic personality. This study shows the mistake of the latter view. Some teachers are veritable Jekyll and Hydes between staffroom and classroom. In some cases certain aspects of the teacher role have become institutionalised in the same way as some organizational processes. That is to say that, through growing pressures on the job, owing to mounting external demands and inadequate resources (including inability to cope) some teachers opt for routine and ritualistic features, such as are described in Chapter 9. They identify more with the formal features of the role. After all, the lines of institutions and their associated roles are drawn for efficiency. Problems arise when the institution and the roles take over. The dialectical relationship between person and institution is lost. The result can be described as dehumanising for both teachers and pupils.

The pupils resolve the problem by 'mucking about' and 'having a laugh'. The first is largely a product of boredom induced by the dead, ossified hand of drab, institutionalised teaching or institutional processes (like Assembly or Speech Days). In Chapter 7, I gave examples which leave no doubt of the crashing boredom experienced by some pupils because of 'repeating lessons', 'doing useless, meaningless work', 'blackboards and blackboards of writing', and so on. The antidote is vandalism, 'silly' behaviour, teacher-baiting, sabotage and

so on. I would argue that there are more 'human' properties about these activities than there are about those to which they are a reaction. The same is true of 'subversive laughter'. Several forms of this, for example, subversive ironies or confrontational laughter, can be seen as attempts to neutralise alien properties, to cut down to size, to strip away the trappings of authority inappropriately used, to repulse unwarranted inroads on their own private resources. Others, like symbolic rebellion, are often directly aimed at institutional symbols such as school property or school uniform.

I pointed out, in Chapters 7 and 10, how pupil behaviour can be misconceived if the wrong context is attributed to it. In Chapter 5, I described three pupil contexts within which their behaviour might be viewed - subject, teacher and institution. Opposed to the latter is what we might term a 'natural' context, for most pupils apparently, an out-of-school one. The pupils themselves have provided ample testimony as to how their attitude and behaviour differs among them.

'Why worry around school, we just slouch around.

Of course, we wouldn't if we were anywhere important.' (Chapter 10)

'Of course, we don't act silly out of school.'

(Chapter 7)

This is not, in other words, a matter of psychological

traits of laziness or immaturity working themselves out, nor, on these occasions, a matter of resistance to socialization into another culture. Basically, at Lowfield, it was often institutional resistance, compounded by teacher misinterpretation and culture clash. Or, pupils having made their peace with the school and established some pupil core norms, teachers would fail to recognise the adaptation and seek to establish official rules, thus producing conflict. Or, contexts would get confused, as in the blazer-ripping incident (Chapter 7), pupils on that occasion jumping the gun that freed them from school. Both teachers and pupils make adaptations to school. Sometimes they harmonise, sometimes they conflict, and sometimes they do not address each other through similar adaptations.

Some teachers find common cause with the pupils and 'aid colonization'. I came across many instances of 'tacit conspiracies' usually directed at school rules of one sort or another (such as the 'smoking game'). This is a form of teacher adaptation to the institutional problem at the opposite pole to sinking oneself fully into the teacher role, which requires exact prosecution of the rules.

But this reaction of the pupils is almost exactly mirrored by the teachers in their staffroom laughter, and I have suggested that it has a similar origin. Some certainly can be interpreted in traditional 'conflict' or 'control' terms, but a large proportion of it equally can be interpreted in a way akin to the 'subversive laughter' of

pupils. In their case it is directed toward institutional elements that constrain their humanity in the normal round of their job. Since these are usually designed and perpetrated by the upper hierarchy, and that often constitutes their whole job, much of this humour is directed against the headteacher and his deputies. Doubtless it intermingles with 'conflict' motives, but the institutional element is clearly discernible. Unfortunate personal characteristics are often the weapons not the objects of attack, and are seized on with alacrity to help pile ridicule on this or that aspect of a new rule, a certain ritual (like hymn-practice) or ceremonial (like Speech Day or Sports Day). Deliberate sabotage is perpetrated at times when bureaucracy exceeds the limits, as in form-filling and 'games' spice the tedium of such activities as writing reports. I described in Chapter 11 how, at times, this form of humour might be discerned running along the edges of the institutional framework - for example in a row of barely disguised smiling faces at the back of the stage during Assembly. And how the most celebrated instances of mirth are provided by the sudden and utterly complete demolition of high institutional form and ceremony, as when the headmaster John George, in full formal, robed official majesty, in the school's most sacred and formalised ritual, before the whole of the school mustered in series, supervised and hierarchical ranks, told them solemnly not to 'fork off' to the dining room on their way to the hall. This one simple double entendre is sufficient to bring the whole of the massive institutional edifice tumbling down.

However, sometimes teachers separate out in the schizophrenic way described. Thus, as teachers, within the teacher role, they might champion the cause of school uniform, while in the staffroom, as 'persons', they might ridicule it. School is full of such anomalies. Perhaps the most remarkable one is the love-hate relationship with pupils, both clearly discernible within the staffroom. I would claim that, though the same place, the contexts are different. Pupil baiting and recrimination, occurs in a 'teacher' context, and arises from both pupils and teachers' inability to fulfil the formal requisites laid down by the institution. The wider the gulf, the stronger the tones, until they can become very abusive indeed, as is shown in Chapter 10 with the study of school reports. When this is relaxed, however, fondness and affection are readily apparent, often, interestingly enough, for the biggest miscreants. Again, this is reciprocated by the pupils - often the biggest villains expressed their 'genuine' fondness for the teachers, while still trying to make their lives hell. However, one of the central elements of the institution - its 'massness' - militates against 'personal' relationships between teachers and pupils. The fact that teachers have to deal with various large groups of pupils draws them away from individuals and towards 'group thinking', towards static typifications and rigid ideal models to which individuals are then related. Nor would it be difficult to lay at this particular door other consequences of high concern at Lowfield. How far are pupil 'showings-up' and degradation rituals a function of

the formal organization of school or class, carried out when a pupil transgresses the formal code or contests the prevailing ideal model? Do they exist to the same degree in less formal, more personalised contexts? And how far are the blockages to relief, the 'laughter-inhibitors' identified in Chapter 11, also a product of purely institutional factors? In this way, the institution threatens to swallow its own placebo and the inmates with it. Thus are the principles of education subverted by the institution.

Identity

The comments above remind us of another conflict point frequently arising, that between the 'mass' approach of the teacher and the individuality of the pupil. Whether by 'childish' treatment, misinterpretation of context, 'showing up', 'picking on', contravening pupil rules, failure to recognise adaptations or trying to socialise, what the teacher is doing is assailing the pupil's desired presentation of self, attacking his very identity. Herein lies the greatest humiliation for pupils, and why so many are perpetually on the defensive. They are engaged in a continual battle for who they are, and who they are to become, while the forces of institutionalization work to deprive him of his individuality and into a mould that accords with teachers' ideal models. We have seen, at Lowfield, 'mortification techniques' typical of institutional life as described by Goffman, degradation rituals (Chapter 8), 'socialization' into the mores of the school, and away from both the background culture and the

individual self (Chapter 10). Repeatedly with regard to their everyday interrelations with teachers, pupils have distinguished between personal and bureaucratic treatment of them.

But the institution impinges on all. Teachers too, bound by commitment, oppressed by growing demands and dwindling resources, guided now by professionalism, now by humanitarian interest in their charges, and subject to the same bureaucratic forces, also are concerned with establishing and maintaining identities within the school. Whether parrying a perceived insubordinate pupil threat by 'showing up', or some high-handed action of the headmaster by ridicule, seeking the aid of parents to support their own constructions, or fending off perceived attacks on them, using institutional devices for their own ends, as in survival, or seeking to neutralise them when they impinge too harshly on the sensitivities, teachers are engaged primarily in promoting and protecting their self-images, the sort of persons they are. Their range of choices is limited and constrained, but they are jealously guarded.

Lowfield appears to verge towards the ideal-typical bureaucratic structure 'which approaches the complete elimination of personalised relationships and non-rational considerations.' (Merton, 1957). As Berger et al say, 'The more frequently the individual comes into contact with bureaucracy the more frequently he is forced into structures of meaning beyond those of his private life,' and 'Encountering bureaucracy is an experience of being

ongoingly surrounded by strangers.' (Berger et al, 1973). Is this what was behind the complaint of the boy and the teachers in Chapter 5 that the 'friendliness of the school has gone'? Clearly it is heavily weighted against progressive ideologies which emphasize individualism. Kanter, for example, has suggested how many of the central characteristics of bureaucracy are reproduced in nursery school, for example its stress on security and rationality, and its reduction of personal accountability. Even in nursery school, 'the organization child was oriented to organizational reality, his play was highly routinised, he had little personal responsibility, and he had developed adaptive techniques for the maintenance of ascendancy.' (Kanter, 1976, p.173). Moreover there is something artificial and highly inappropriate about bureaucratic structures in people-processing institutions. Berger et al view playing a role as 'ipso facto, to engage in hypocrisy. The real self (that spontaneous un-"repressed" to-be-intuited entity) is presumed to lie beneath or beyond all roles, which are masks, camouflage, obstacles to the discovery of the real self.' (1973, p.190). Thus tradition can no longer vouchsafe a reasonably watertight world within the institution with its own insulated conceptions of respect, honour and identity.

'The disintegration of this world as a result of the forces of modernity has not only made honour an increasingly meaningless notion, but has served as the occasion for a redefinition of identity and its intrinsic dignity apart from and often against the institutional roles through which the individual expressed himself in society... Institutions cease to be the "home" of the

self; instead they become oppressive realities that distort and estrange the self.'

(Berger et al, 1973. p.86)

Modern society's solution to this problem, according to Berger et al, is the creation of the 'private' sphere, and the division of the individual's involvement between 'private' and 'public' spheres. We saw this illustrated in Chapters 4 and 10 with teachers' negotiations with parents, and in Chapters 4 and 7, which showed the dichotomization of pupils' lives. Lowfield, for me, strongly suggested that the most severe forms of division for teachers, pupils and parents arose from the institutional framework of the school, and its bureaucratic forms of control.

External factors

Some indications have been given of possible connections between school processes and the world outside. The institution impinges on all, both staff and pupils, but it impinges on some more than others - pupils more than teachers, and some pupils more than others. Teachers try to inculcate their models into pupils, and to create the necessary conditions bring institutional forces to bear. In both respects, some pupils - those primarily of middle-class background - respond more readily than others. For they are already equipped with the relevant frameworks. In this sense, some pupils are doubly disadvantaged.

Becker wrote:

'Professionals depend on their environing society to provide them with clients who meet the standards of their image of the ideal client. Social class cultures, among other factors, may operate to produce many clients who, in one way or another, fail to meet these specifications and, therefore, aggravate one or another of the basic problems of the worker-client relation.'

(1977, p.113)

Becker himself demonstrated how social class differences contributed to three major problem areas for his Chicago teachers - teaching, discipline, and moral acceptability. In this country, Bernstein has demonstrated the importance of social class identity in the area of language, and Ford, Box and Young have examined class cultural differences in the areas of justice, friendship and privacy. (1971). Willis has remarked on the similarities between school counter-cultures and shop-floor culture. (1977). Similar differences along similar lines to these studies were evident at Lowfield. Pupil and parent perspectives appear to differ along these lines (Chapter 4), and at times there seems to exist a state of what I described as 'cultural warfare', complete with strategies, cold wars, skirmishing and set-piece battles (see especially Chapters 7 and 10). I have remarked on possible relationships between social class and distribution of pupil adaptations and careers among them, pupil views of curriculum, teacher and institution (Chapter 5), and certain features of pupil life-styles (Chapters 7 and 8). Further, the divisions fostered by social class differences are aggravated by school processes and organization (Chapter 4).

It may be thought that the analysis in Chapter 4 supports a 'social control' argument, and illustrates how the mechanism of connecting linkages works. The school is divided into two broad channels, reflected in individual groups by those chosen for examinations and those not. Parents used to gaining from the selective, sponsored system, make their influence felt upon the school through the headmaster. The teachers then seek to achieve those groupings which will yield optimum results, which benefits some, penalizes others. But the penalties are legitimated through a number of 'fair procedures', including the inculcation of the notion that that is the natural way of the world. The idea that much of school life, and possibly the most important part of it, is concerned with social relations and takes the form of one culture seeking to destroy another might also appear to be supported by the argument in Chapter 10.

However, while Lowfield might add some support to a social control argument, it also exposes loopholes in it. One important feature overlooked or relegated, is that of individual choice. But we have seen that at Lowfield at least, if in some respects 'choice' was rather an euphemism, in others a considerable range of choice existed. Teacher style, for example, was a matter of much variation. Teachers are not all constrained, either by the institution or by society, to act in roughly the same way. The blueprint of the ideal teacher given by the pupils in Chapters 5 and 6 was based on their real experiences; and arguably he or she is judged by qualities that cut across

social class divisions. Qualities of warmth, friendship, understanding, ability to explain and so on, as discussed in Chapter 5, which these 4th year pupils valued above all things, owe nothing to social class, but everything to remaining human against institutional pressures, and to teacher skill and ability. This contrasts with the class-bound culture clash between teacher and pupils recounted in Chapter 10. The class element is certainly there, but it is not all pervasive, and it differs from teacher to teacher. Inasmuch as its effects are mediated through people, some teachers are more powerful mediators than others. Thus it may be said to exert a pressure on basic school organization and orientation, but may have little or no consequences at all for what takes place between teacher and pupil. It often does, of course (as in Chapter 10), but that at least is a matter of choice for the teacher. In other words, a selective society might exert a strong influence over the basic organization of the school, and the distribution of pupils within it, and institutionalization might force the teacher into constructing ideal models, but he does not necessarily have to be governed by criteria valued by the so-called dominant culture. In fact one suspects large phalanxes of teachers in the state system opposed to such criteria, who find common cause with all pupils, along the lines articulated by pupils in Chapter 5. And this helps to sustain counter-cultures. These are not legitimating tactics. There is a transparency about subject choice strategies and survival rhetorics that teachers themselves see through,

especially when in the 'personal' context. There is no such transparency about the kind of 'warm' teacher-pupil relationship discussed above.

The Divided Self

Berger et al speak of the 'componentiality' of cognitive style in the modern technological state, whereby 'the components of reality are self-contained units which can be brought into relation with other such units' (Berger et al, 1973, p.32).

'Componentiality' is a feature of life in the modern industrial state, as is the separation of work from private life, the dominant position of the 'expert', and anonymous social relations, of which I shall say more shortly. School reflects the pluralistic nature of modern life, now representing a mechanistic functionality, now a warm humanity; hours of tedium, moments of joy; pain and humiliation, gladness and laughter; conflict and opposition; togetherness and sociability; with certain linkages with society which promote a reproduction of the way things are, but with large interstices around them that are potential areas of choice, and seedbeds of change.

This book has been a case study of the implications for process of an institution in the technological state. It has included descriptions and analysis of 'getting the worst of it' (Chapter 8 and parts of Chapters 7 and 11); 'making the best of it' (Chapters 4, 6 and 9); 'fulfilling

the obligations of it' (Chapters 6 and 10); and, perhaps, 'transcending it' (Chapters 7 and 11). Within this framework, there is another, brought out in Chapter 4, linking school process to the actual structure of the particular society in which we live. Such linkages, powerful and pervasive (together with the cultural forms and social class differences with which they are associated), have led some to conclude that they are paramount. But behind these hangs a greater influence, common to all forms of modern advanced industrial societies, which embraces capitalist and communist, teacher and pupil, middle-class and working-class alike.

This influence derives from technological production and bureaucracy. It promotes increasing rationalization and systematization of life, concentrating man's impact on society in his instrumental aspirations and functionary relationships. One consequence has been the separation of the public and private spheres of life, with much of man's personal investment in the latter.

'... "Ultimate" significance is found by the typical individual in modern industrial societies primarily in the "private" sphere - and thus in his "private" biography. The traditional symbolic universes become irrelevant to the everyday experience of the typical individual and lose their character as a (superordinated) reality. The primary school institutions, on the other hand turn into realities whose sense is alien to the individual. The transcendent social order ceases to be subjectively significant both as a representation of an encompassing cosmic meaning and in its concrete institutional manifestations. With respect to matters that "count", the individual is retrenched in the "private sphere".'

(Luckmann, 1967, p.109)

This division is well in evidence at Lowfield between classroom and staffroom (or playing field), between teacher as functionary pedagogue and teacher as private person, between pupil as pupil and pupil as child. Other consequences resulting from the technologizing of society are equally well in evidence - the emphasis on enterprise, the division of labour and the curriculum.

Teachers are the 'experts' the 'professionals', most of them with their own specialist preserve, which protects them not only against lay people, but also against colleagues. A headteacher of a secondary school might have overall responsibility for the school, but he would be quite unable to teach or master the range of specialisms involved. The curriculum has become divided and subdivided, the areas thus created tending first to ensure their own self-preservation, then gathering strength with a view, possibly, to some further fission. Thus have teachers become more and more 'expert' as their area of preserve becomes increasingly digested in this rationalizing process. Some of this is brought out in Chapter 10, on reports. The overwhelming and exclusive pressure is on the certainty of the school's aims, the rightness of the content of the curriculum (if not always its form), the media of its relaying, its forms of assessment, the relationships between teacher and taught, the sanctity of the teacher as judge of the future by virtue of his knowledge of 'what is required in this particular world' and of a particular child. Only the teacher, by virtue of his expert knowledge of both, can solve the equation and 'properly' predict a child's future.

But, as we saw in Chapter 10, the knowledge of the child is invariably stereotypical. The teacher makes group assessments and attributes them to individuals, and he does this for a rationalistic framework of society. It is this kind of process, perhaps, that led Illich, for example, to conclude that 'the safeguards of individual freedom are all cancelled in the dealings of a teacher with his pupil.' (Illich, 1973, p.11). In the campaign for equality of opportunity (palpably unsuccessful to date), one must reconsider the question - opportunity for what?

However, my conclusion is not quite so pessimistic as Illich's. For the Lowfield study, while certainly showing these signs, also shows the strong existence in certain areas of individuality, ingenuity, inventiveness and joie de vivre. This results from the dual function of school, expressed in concern for the production of man both for the public and for the private arena of life. Here is Weber's classic distinction between the 'specialist' and the 'cultivated' type of man.

'Behind all the present discussions of the foundations of the educational system, the struggle of the "specialist type of man" against the older type of "cultivated man" is hidden at some decisive point. This fight is determined by the irresistibly expanding bureaucratization of all public and private relations of authority and by the ever-increasing importance of expert and specialized knowledge.'

(Weber, 1946, p.243)

At times they complement each other, at times they clash,

for basically they are in tension with each other. We have seen how teachers resolve this at Lowfield with a variety of adaptations, ranging from on the one hand teacher-as-teacher in a well demarcated and rationally oriented role, and on the other teacher-as-person, comparatively free of the bureaucratic structures which both constrain and direct him, a 'whole' person in pupils' eyes in the sense that there is no split between 'public' and 'private', no rational and other components in the prosecution of his job, and in command of, rather than subservient to, the teacher role. In this guise, teachers often display 'charismatic' qualities.

We could say that the dilemma is resolved in one of three basic ways. Either the teacher assumes one guise - teacher-person or teacher-bureaucrat - for the whole of his time in school, or he oscillates between the two. We might hypothesise that teacher-persons are largely to be found where the bureaucratic processes press least - in the 'easy' subjects like Art, or with specialist non-examination form teachers, while teacher-bureaucrats congregate at the policy-making end, among headteachers, deputies, other senior personnel, and keen aspirants to those positions. The continual co-optation of teacher-bureaucrats into the positions of authority in schools and influential educational organizations might be another powerful reason for system-continuance. The majority, however, seem to conform to the third type, the oscillator, the split personality, the teacher schizophrenic,

who moves, often uncomfortably, between the two states.

The transition is not always as sudden or as distinct as this, of course. The teacher-role is often sustained by group pressure in the staffroom depending on circumstances, and who is present. At Lowfield, however, its main function was as a disrobing room, a private area, where you could send up without fear of redress the artificial contours of the school, and the paradoxes and inconsistencies of your own position in it, and the requirements made of you.

What this amounts to is a fractionalizing of activity in the school, mirrored in a fractionalizing of consciousness. But it has still that other division, within the teacher role, made possible and tolerable because of the very fact that the teacher is professionally - not personally - committed. The latter involves total dedication, the former allows room for more schizoid manoeuvring. At one level, the teacher does his professional job, and teaches. This is the most obvious level, so taken for granted that its share of teacher application compared to other fractions of his activity have not been examined. The second level, by contrast, at which a teacher operates, is one of a 'hidden pedagogy', that is not concerned with teaching at all, but 'surviving'. Either one has become preoccupied with the systematic pursuit of appropriate means to have lost all sight of the ends, or one is caught up in a continuous struggle to master the most elementary means, such as controlling large groups of recalcitrant

children, or inventing adequate resources. This in turn, reinforces the teacher/person division, the teacher seeking more personal fulfillment in private areas and periods, and in his own free time, the more that, in his teacher capacity, he is forced to concentrate on survival. The further this threefold division in teacher activity advances, the more institutionalised and mechanical it becomes. The reluctant schoolchild is joined by the reluctant teacher. The joy of relief in playground or staffroom laughter, and in other marginal areas and moments, is common to both pupils and teachers. Apart, in separate groups, they are whole persons. When they come together in the educative process, they break up into splinters. Thus one predominant theme running throughout the thesis is that of 'divisions' - division of the 'self' and of 'consciousness' on the part of both pupils and teachers, division of public and private spheres of life, between choice and direction, of laughter and conflict, pleasure and pain, as well as divisions between and within groups of pupils, teachers and parents owing to their different social locations, both in regard to the school and to the social structure. These divisions are of such an order that they threaten to increase, if anything, under comprehensivization.

Implications

A full discussion of the practical significance of this study falls outside the boundaries of this thesis, but I will end with a brief personal statement of the implications as I see them, assuming that Lowfield is fairly typical of

the schools in our secondary system. I have argued that this study does not support 'hard deterministic' approaches. There are inevitable connections with the prevailing social structure, and with the nature and distribution of occupations; and there are institutional and professional pressures. But their influence is uneven and sporadic, and leaves gaps in the system, where a range of choices exists at a number of levels - governmental, local, professional, within the school, departmental, personal. Change is possible at all these levels, to some degree or other.

We need to be honest about, and give a little more thought to, our aims. If the school is primarily instrumental in the sense that its main efforts are directed toward certification, then a high degree of systematization and bureaucracy would appear to be indicated. Such precise ends require precise means. At the same time, however, some strong 'personal' compensation would be required in the form of high provision of 'off-moments' and 'private areas', to avoid dissatisfaction with the major process, and possibly reduced performance. Traffic between the two areas can only be one way. That is to say that one can personalize bureaucracies, but not bureaucratize personal areas. Thus, in a certification-centred school, personalized aims such as may be implied in 'education for leisure' or 'education for life' - i.e. training for the personal, private sphere, whatever one's occupation - are unlikely to be realized. The basis for such education is inappropriate. Indeed, where it is held to operate, it

may only disguise a form of social control which facilitates the school's main activity.

But if schools have a genuine wider aim, and 'education for life' is not simply rhetoric or an ideology, then we need to reconsider their organization and structure, and teachers their own identities. School cannot escape the society it serves. This was shown in Chapter 2. Even without the critical external influence of extra parental pressure demanding even better examination results, the constraint would still operate, albeit, a little more diffused. Certification, rationalization and social class are well entrenched. The question is, rather, do we recognize this? Are we masters of our own destinies? For understanding means control. Non-recognition means slavery, with faceless institutions and their factotums as our slavemasters. We have seen some of the convolutions teachers go through to make acceptable sense of a number of profound contradictions that attend their work. One of them is to assume a bureaucratic identity, to invest their person in the role, to elevate the criteria of the institution to prime position. Lots of things that happen in school 'make better sense' from that position. It eases accommodation. If this has to occur, then I would appeal for 'partial' or 'incidental' investment, which did not call for total commitment of the self. Some elements of this would then be left free to enrich the interstices of the school day, and the lives of all within it. Without this saving mechanism, the institutional consciousness will encroach ever more on the few personal areas remaining -

putting the 'far side of the field' out of bounds, and rendering staffrooms places of business rather than sanctums of laughter.

This is assuming no change in the situation. The only change we can make in such a circumstance is within ourselves. But if we seek to change the situation, then clear recommendations follow from this study. Chapters 9, 10 and 11 have shown how, at Lowfield, the teachers' energies and talents were expended in three main activities - surviving, being professionals, and being persons. The preoccupation with 'survival' follows from pressures and low resources; the 'professional' concern is mainly with matters of certification, the school's instrumental aims; it is in the third area, the personal, I would argue, that the broad aims of 'education for life' are to be realized, if they are to be realized at all. But the area can only gain at the expense of the other two.

We need to save our teachers, relieving them of the preoccupation with survival, and they need to de-professionalize. To lessen survival concerns would entail increasing resources and/or lessening demands. This is not simply, or even essentially, a matter of injecting more money and more teachers into the system. It would appear more realistic to experiment with the system, the length of the school day, the forms of education the young are offered, especially at secondary level, so that, for example, groups were of more manageable size, and 'freos' readily available. But beyond this fairly

obvious fact, lies a less obvious one, and hence possibly more important. For part of the pressure on the teacher has arisen from increased interest in 'education' as an activity, and the attentions of an army of educational theorists, other educationists, curriculum innovators and teacher trainers. Many of these have operated at a different plane from the teacher struggling with the realities of the classroom, being concerned with 'pure' aspects of education untainted with details of application. Many of their urgings and recommendations, delivered with the force, authority and backing of real powers in the education system cause problems for teachers, for they cannot be ignored. Again, perforce, they must be accommodated. But if financial restrictions cannot be helped, we as educationists should know better. Curriculum reformers, for example, need to take into account the primitive level at which many teachers are forced to operate, and possibly transform an irresolvable pressure into an aid. I would not wish to claim that this omission is always the case, nor deny the possibility and existence of much cohesion between reformers and practitioners. Lowfield, however, for me, demonstrated how easy it is to lose sight of the mediating mechanisms between idea and practice.

De-professionalizing teaching does not mean demoting teacher knowledge and skills. It means getting rid of all the spurious ways in which teachers, and others, promote a sense of their indispensability, infallibility and inevitability, and the many supporting mechanisms of this,

such as differentiation from other groups, like parents, their own elaborate forms of hierarchy, and the bureaucratic framework of the school. Perhaps this is why the notion of 'community schools' seems to be becoming popular. It promises to cut across many of these boundaries which have been erected in defence of professionalism, though how entrenched these attitudes are remains to be seen. The abolition of the post of headteacher would be in the spirit of such a reform. The effect of such a range of reforms would be to dispel the enormous impulsion teachers have felt under in recent years to close ranks, and to undertake a new co-operative venture with parents and children in a common task. There would be a rearrangement of responsibilities uncommon in the technocratic society. But if we are not to find it in our schools, where are we to find it?

It might be argued that such an enormous increase in 'personal investment' in school that must accrue with such life-saving injections and de-professionalization, is unrealistic in our society, and promises to ill-equip children for the occupations that lay ahead of them. But that itself is a technocratic view. The nature of much present-day work makes it all the more necessary that people are able to explore the possibilities of personal enrichment in their own leisure, throughout their working lives. This is one of the great driving forces behind the notion of recurrent education. But it needs a firm basis, one that is established during the formative years of childhood, instead of the monotonous conformity to prevailing standards

and conditions as described in Chapter 2 which becomes the accepted practice by all.

Even without concerted or large-scale reform, there is much that teachers can do. In forging relationships with each other, and with their pupils of a less 'role-bound' nature, 'stepping outside' the institution, using it instead of allowing it to use them, mellowing the alienating features of bureaucracy, they can help counter-balance the worst effects. As the monasteries in the dark ages preserved culture, so schools in the technocratic age can preserve humanity. At Lowfield, as at so many of our State secondary schools, it was evident mainly in the margins, the 'interstitial areas' of school life. It needs to be more of a conscious and central policy, and less of an incidental and peripheral happening. It is the only way we can master our institutions before they master us.

This is not a utopian plea for complete 'freedom' for the individual, or a metaphysical one for recovery of a human essence that has somehow got lost along the way. Rather, like Simmel, it is in the hope that 'the unforeseeable work of mankind will produce ever more numerous and varied forms with which the human personality will affirm itself and prove the worth of its existence. And if, in fortunate periods, these varied forms may order themselves harmoniously, even their possible contradiction and struggle will not merely disrupt that work, but rather will stimulate it to new demonstrations of strength and lead to new creations.' (Simmel, 1971, p.226).

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THE OPEN UNIVERSITYThe Questionnaire to ParentsSTRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Please complete the form as indicated. If you wish to add any comments; please do so in the spaces following the questions. Please ignore any questions you may find difficult to answer.

The name of your child in the 3rd year
 His or her present class
 Your relationship to child (Mother/Father/Guardian)
 Your occupation

1. Did your child ask your advice about what subjects should be chosen?
 Yes/No

2. How important do you consider the following pieces of advice to pupils considering what subjects to take? (Place a tick in the box that applies for each statement)

	Very Import.	Quite Import.	Of some import.	Not very import.	Not at all important
a) Do those subjects you're best at					
b) Do those subjects you're interested in					
c) Do those subjects with the best teachers					
d) Do those subjects you want to					
e) Do those subjects likely to lead to a good job					
f) Do those subjects your teachers advise					

3. Do you feel fully competent to advise your child on such a matter?
 Yes/No
 If not, please explain

4. Did you attend either of the 3rd year parents' evenings at the school?
 Yes/No

5. Do you think the school offers a reasonable choice of subjects?
 Yes/No/Don't know

If not, please explain why you think not

6. Do you think the school gives enough information and advice to pupils and parents on the matter of subject choice?
 Yes/No/Don't know

If no, can you say what it is that you would like to know more about?

7. Do you think that the school does as much as it reasonably can to see pupils get the subjects which they choose?
 Yes/No/Don't Know

If no, please explain

8. How important do you think the following aims should be for the school?
Please tick the relevant box.

To teach children about life
To teach children so that they get as good qualifications as possible
To teach good manners and courtesy
To prepare children for a job
To keep children occupied till they go out to work
To teach children to be good citizens
To teach children to think for themselves

Very Import.	Quite Of some	Not very	Not at all	Don't know

9. How suitable do you think your child is for the following subject groups.
Please tick the relevant box in each case.

Practical subjects (eg Woodwork, Housecraft)
Commercial subjects (Typing, Shorthand, etc)
Science subjects (Physics, Chemistry, Biology, etc)
Arts subjects (eg History, Geography, English lit.)
Non-examination subjects (eg Environmental Studies) Social Studies

Very suitable	Quite suitable	Not very suitable	Don't know

10. How far do you feel each of the following has influenced your views of your child's suitability? Please tick the relevant box in each case.

Past reports from school
Your child's performance in exams
Your own knowledge of the child
Your knowledge of the rest of the family
Teachers' recommendations
The child's own view of him or herself
Your knowledge of other children like him/her

Very influential	Quite influential	A little	Not very influential

11. Have you any idea of what sort of work you hope your child will be going into when he/she leaves school?

Yes/N.

If yes, please say what it is.

12. What sort of work do you expect your child to be doing when he/she leaves school?

Please add further comments you wish to make about 3rd year subject choice in the space below.

13. Please put a tick in the box if you would be willing for me to call round to discuss this matter briefly with you.

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